

Lucy Southill

with luminous hazel eyes under arching eyebrows and an expression of taking vivid interest in everything she sees —(Foreword)

A PASSPORT TO CHINA

Being the Tale of Her Long and Friendly Sojourning amongst a Strangely Interesting People

By LUCY SOOTHILL

WITH A FOREWORD BY HER DAUGHTER

LADY HOSIE

16 ILLUSTRATIONS



HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LIMITED LONDON
WARWICK SQUARE, E C. 4
MCMXXXI

First published, 1931

Made and Printed in Great Britain for Hodder and Stoughton Ltd
by T. and A. Constable Ltd., Printers, Edinburgh

TO

MY HUSBAND

FOREWORD BY HER DAUGHTER, LADY HOSIE

"MY first experience of China was a Riot: my last a Revolution Was living in China worth while? Well worth while" So writes my mother in the final chapter of this book.

In the *Three Character Classics*, which Chinese school-children used to learn by heart, is a famous story of a virtuous boy whose old parents longed to eat fish The season being winter, he lay upon the ice, melted it with his body's warmth, and caught the fish! Never have I attained such heights of filial piety Seeing however, that my father has twice written introductions for books of mine, is it not right that I should now perform a similar office for my mother?

Indeed, it is only the payment of a debt that I should write Was it not my mother who, after I went back to China as a grown up young lady fresh from school, set pen and paper before me my first entrancing China New Year? Outside our haven of the White House in that Chinese city fire-crackers exploded all down "Tilemarket Street" In and out of the room she passed, busy with Chinese friends and with the interchange of mandarin oranges and red peppers, dyed eggs and smoked ducks, sweet persimmons and paper-white narcissi—or "water-fairy flowers" On one of her incursions she found me sighing, confounded by that stumbling block of the incipient author—the *first sentence* "Then begin with *the second!*" quoth she gaily . advice which seemed inspired, and for which I can never be sufficiently grateful In truth, she has been our family critic and help all along A great reader herself, she brought a cultivated taste and a discriminating penetration which, though mingled with natural kindness, demanded diffi-

cult achievements of us Lucidity in literature was her especial requirement and her search for the exact word was unremitting The result, seasoned with her spicy sense of humour, will be found in these, her own lively and living pages, with their theme of high endeavour founded on deep spiritual experience

I once wrote in a book thus

> "A lady with white hair, luminous hazel eyes under arching eyebrows, and an expression of taking vivid interest in everything she saw, stood waiting outside Wing On's door"

It was flattering that my mother's friends at once recognized her In fact, they used to invite me to put her doings into all my books, quoting in particular the time when she sallied out to save the Lo family's silver hoard, carrying a revolver in a small red satin bag worked in blue forget-me-nots!

But I have mind pictures further back than that of a dark haired hostess making life, even in an out of the way Chinese Treaty Port, seem vital and enriching I see her, walking with the hill born woman's springing gait over the glens and dales of South China, darting eagerly aside to pluck ferns azaleas, roses Or later, in North China, riding in more sedate middle-age on the fattest white horse ever seen rolling a broad back, which she flicked with innocuous whip He grunted for breath as he responded to her incorrigible spirit of inquiry, scrambling safely with her in the precipitous loess along goat-tracks which alarmed me I *see her again, poring over intricate embroidery* patterns for the benefit of her poorer Chinese women friends or lingering to correct a little Chinese girl's first essay, on a slate, the child in her variegated tunic halting between awe and affection at her knee

During the European War, my mother and father led bands

of young Chinese interpreters, ten at a time, about London, to behold its marvels Lately we came upon poems written by them in acknowledgment saying how she had taken them upon "the rainbow buses flashing between the houses, and the moving glow-worms of the underground trains deep under the earth" When settling down in England, she was happy to be surrounded by Chinese objects and colours, the very woof and web of her life Her natural background seemed blue and grey Peking carpets, and temple tapestries with their swirling dragons a cabinet from Shansi with painted panels and brass hinges and the carved blackwood chairs which she, as a good housekeeper, has often herself polished

No Oriental "Woman without a Name" she! Her name, Lucy, is as pleasing as in English when transliterated into the Chinese language—spoken by her with such purity Lu-Hsi, it runs and it means, very aptly, Brightness upon the-Way What could be more suitable for one so starry, so candid, so lovely—whose life has been spent in carrying "the Light"?

DOROTHEA HOSIE

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The author wishes to thank the following for the use of illustrations —Mrs BUTLER, who kindly lent photographs taken by her late husband, T BUTLER, Esq , F R G S , and G V KITSON, Esq , H B M China Consular Service

LUCY SOOTHILL *Frontispiece*

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Halts by me that footfall ?

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

A PASSPORT TO CHINA CHAPTER I

(1)

"SO *they have sent me out another youngster to die!*" said the Veteran in our Service when he met the pale faced, black haired youth of two-and-twenty who stepped eagerly off the tender at Shanghai in the autumn of 1882

"We must find this young man an anchor or he will be all over China!" is what he ejaculated a year and a half later And a more urgent petition than the Veteran ever sent on his own behalf went home to England, in which he recommended that the youth be allowed forthwith to marry, despite the fact that this would considerably antedate his period of probation Wisely—or unwisely!—the request was granted In consequence, the youth—hereinafter called Sing Su, by Chinese mode of speech—entreated me to go out and act, not as an anchor of the soul, but apparently as a deadweight, a holdfast to the City-of-the-South This city of China remains to the present day a Tom Thumb port in size from the Maritime Customs point of view. Its foreign, or Western, inhabitants are few, and its foreign trade has been slow in growth as to volume and value But a hundred thousand Chinese dwell within its grey old walls and in its narrow streets

Of course Sing Su did not put his startling invitation as baldly as that Yet on receiving it, I knew instantly, and from internal evidence, that, whether I liked or not, I should have to go and do what I could to put a drag on the chariot wheels of so adventurous and exploring a spirit In this particular I succeeded to perfection, as our long twenty-five years' residence in the City-of-the-South testified Probably the cunningly devised letters that followed, hard after each other, confirmed my decision They were enough to lure a duck off the water Amen these same epistles, on my arrival in Ningpo a man there jocosely inquired if I had brought them with me

"Some," I answered

"Then read one aloud to him every day—to remind him of what he has promised you," was the advice.

An occasion arose when I deemed it politic to do this and produced one But he whose "Sing," or surname, was "Su" in Chinese, and whose career in life had been deflected from the study of law, was not easily trapped

"Loving? Yes, always, but I never promised to be useful," came the quick retort which was what I wanted him to be at the moment

As for me, it was easier to decide on going to China than to go Difficulties arose, the worst of which came after my boxes —big and unwieldy as dromedaries—were packed, my berth taken, and myself in the very act of bidding farewell to my fiancé's people At that moment, with dramatic impact a cable arrived at the door which set me aquiver

"European houses all burnt in the City-of-the South no lives lost" Thus ran the laconic statement

These evil tidings did indeed give pause, but in the end certain sympathetic spirits decided that it would be too discouraging for any young man to lose both wife and house at one fell blow In later years the beneficiary of my devotion would tease me over this generosity on my part "She was so anxious to go that not even a riot could stop her," he would assert

The short interval before sailing was filled with a frantic effort to rid myself of my abysmal ignorance of the land whither I was going Truth to tell I had never altogether lost the childish impression that the Celestial Empire, which vied with Tibet in mystery, was surrounded by a monstrously high perpendicular wall, over which every one who would enter must first perform the well nigh impossible feat of climbing There was no other entrance

In the October of 1884 I set sail, knowing not a soul on board, and trusting—if ever I did in my life—in Divine Providence The Bay of Biscay lived up to its reputation and behaved abominably For days I lay in my berth too ill to move with the flagellations I received Indeed I should have stayed there for ever had not a kind German fraulein, returning to her work in India under the Church Zenana Missionary Society, come to my rescue The battered passengers were collecting again on deck, a rumour went round that a young lady lay very ill in one of the cabins, so she went to see what she could do

"Won't you come up on deck? It is better now," she said

"I cannot dress," I forlornly replied

"Do try, I will help you Have you a long cloak?"

"Yes, fur-lined," I said

"With that you need not dress even, and I will help you up"

Thus encouraged, together we struggled to the top of the companion-way just in time to be thrown violently down by a wave in a heap on the deck Considerate fellow sufferers rescued us, placed me in a long chair and fed me with Liebig—the panacea of those days But I have detested and shunned the Bay ever since

In 1884 the hospitality of Shanghai was as generous as it was wide I was received by people of whom I had never heard, who gave us a delightful wedding breakfast, to which we were free to invite whom we desired An ideally handsome "Father" not only gave me away, but also adopted me for all time He made a happy breakfast speech, and afterward entertained us for a week in his comfortable house, although his wife was then at home in England Our wedding hostess did her best to encourage me by asserting her conviction that my dark hair and rosy cheeks were certain to commend themselves to the Chinese—who, apparently, had little use for blue eyes or fair hair.

Thus lapped in kindness, it was only when Sing Su and I—married just two short weeks—stood solitary on the deck of the little coasting-steamer, waving farewell to our apprehensive Ningpo friends, that I realized to what a life I had committed myself So far, all had gone well; but as the ship loosed from her moorings, a sudden mist blinded my eyes, shutting out shore and friends I felt that I, too, had cut adrift, and was leaving all my known world behind I was launching forth, not only on the uncharted sea of matrimony, but for a destination which might easily prove as inhospitable and perilous to me as it had already shown itself to Sing Su.

(II)

Our vessel, the *Yung-Ning*, or *Eternal Peace*, was the smallest cockleshell driven by steam I ever saw This may readily be believed when I append that she had been the mail-

boat from London to the Cape fifty years before! An upper deck had been added, which in stormy weather threatened to turn her turtle On board were three European officers and a Chinese crew The captain's was the only comfortable cabin

"The lady shall have it," said he to Sing Su

He and Sing Su spent the time discussing the recent Riot while we threaded our way through the numerous small islands down the coast These looked lovely, but the water, thick and turbid with the silt of the Yellow Sea, needed to be redeemed, and was so, by the fleets of small fishing boats Their white sails flashed like silver as they flew along in the breeze and sunshine

Hereabouts, I now learned, pirates were still possible But in former years they had infested this part of the China coast until, indeed, British and Chinese cruisers, the latter captained at that time by foreigners, drove them out of action Later, an amah of mine told me how, twenty years earlier, her own father was a passenger in a junk which was seized by pirates in these waters With the rest of the passengers he was thrown overboard When he clung to the sides of the boat to save his life, they loosened his hold by slashing off his fingers with their knives He fell back and was drowned To Amah this seemed to be just another of life's trials, to be accepted with resignation

It was the French war with China which caused the Riot that had taken place in the City of the-South two months before I reached there The people had been in a restless fever of excitement for some time, fearing an attack from the French who had attacked Foochow directly to the south The city had been officially placarded with instructions ordering each householder to have ready, outside his door, a heap of big stones Carpenters worked hard, both day and night, fashioning huge wooden cases which were towed some distance down the bank of the river When the watching fishermen gave the signal that the enemy was at the mouth of the river, these stones were to be carried by each householder and emptied into the cases, which were then to be sunk in mid stream Thus an impassable barrier would block the entrance to our river, the Ao—or Bowl River—from whose mouth our city is distant twenty miles

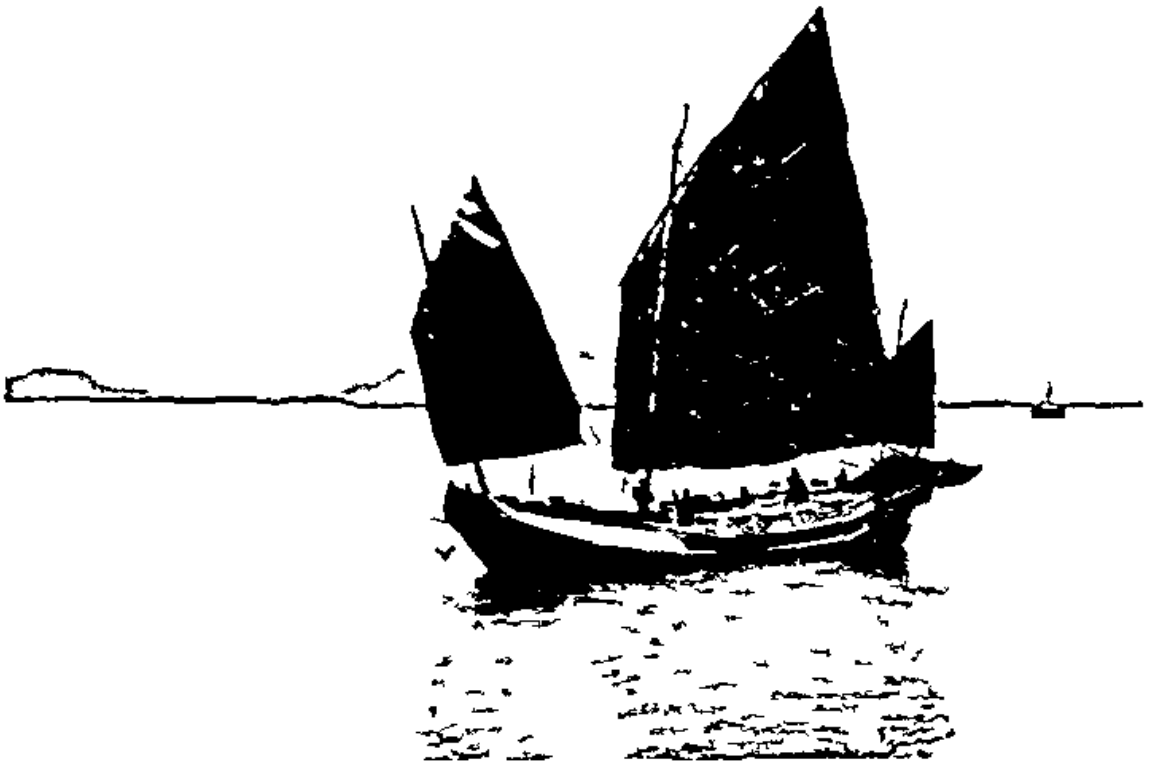


Photo by T Butler F R G.S

Junk and steamer
at the mouth of the Lo.vl Ri er

But though the stones were collected, and the cases built, neither were put to their intended use. For years the huge tubs rotted on the banks; but in the Riot in which Sing Su suffered, some of the stones served as handy missiles, to the danger of the handful of Europeans in the city.

One Saturday night, twenty or thirty Chinese Christians met together for the usual service in a room on the premises adjoining Sing Su's house. Before the opening hymn was finished, a sudden attack was made on the front of his house. A mob had collected there, and finding the door unyielding, turned its attention to the back premises, and with greater success. Soon those identical stones came hurtling through the doors and windows, and in a short time the back wooden gate fell under combined effort, allowing the crowd to pour pell-mell into the yard. Meanwhile Sing Su had gone round to the front, but, seeing a dangerous blaze in his servants' quarters, ran back there, where he found a crowd of men gathered, many of whom were naked because of the hot weather. They carried sticks and were throwing stones, and were watching with approval the wooden floor merrily ablaze with the foreigner's own lamp-oil.

Calling to some of his friends to put out the fire, Sing Su approached the mob, which, when it saw him, incontinently fled. He followed, and began to expostulate. The only answer was a stone, which missed him but cut open the head of a Chinese Christian near him. Sing Su sent messenger after messenger hot-foot to the magistrate, asking help and protection. He made no mention of Treaty Rights, nor of Extra-territoriality: he merely made the appeal of a peaceable citizen when attacked. But no help was forthcoming. The situation becoming dangerous, Sing Su set off in person, with only his riding-stick as protection, to inquire if the official had gone on a journey, or were asleep and must needs be waked. For a time the magistrate refused to see him; but he relented in the end, and listened to what he had to say. After long delay, and then with great deliberation, the magistrate himself set off in his official chair on the unpleasant business of quelling the disturbance. Vain were his belated efforts. The mob, now greatly augmented, warned him not to interfere, and they set

about purposely to fire, first Sing Su's premises, and then the rest of the half-dozen European homes scattered in various quarters of the city.

When Sing Su had proposed returning with the official to the scene of action, he was firmly told that this would not be permitted. He must remain in the yamen, where he was virtually a prisoner—but comparatively safe. Here, as time passed, he was joined by two other members of the little community who, in the effort to escape from their burning homes and the mob, had run the gauntlet of showers of stones combined with shouts of "*Tae-sz*—Beat to death!" One of the two was an old man, an American. The other was a Scot, and lame. When the canny Scot saw that the yamen gate was to be shut in their faces, to keep out the crowd, he cleverly inserted one of his crutches and retained an opening until it was made possible for them to push inside. After which, the massive doors were closed on the rioters. Thus it would seem that their own efforts saved their lives.

Other two young men, members of the Maritime Customs, escaped by dropping down over the city wall, some thirty feet. They carried their sporting guns, and with such aid to obedience, compelled the solitary boatman they were lucky enough to find to row them across to the British consulate. Here Her Britannic Majesty's consul sat in solemn state, having for the occasion donned his cocked hat and silver-laced uniform. Arrayed thus, he hoped to overawe the attacking force—which did not come: but only because the Taotai, or head official, had forestalled the rioters by ordering all the boats away out of their reach, to the far bank of the mile-wide river! In so doing he desired, doubtless, to avoid serious complications with foreign powers.

As may be imagined, the little company in the yamen—now increased to four by the coming of another Englishman—passed an anxious night watching the glare in the sky and trying to locate each other's burning houses. They wondered if the mob would not attempt to break in, and succeed in destroying them also, although as refugees they were ostensibly under official protection. Happily at this time there was not one white woman in the city, unlike during the Siege of the Legations

at Peking sixteen years later, when the harassed men there succeeded in sending through their terse cable to London, "We have with us two hundred women and children"

Sunday morning dawned, bringing to Sing Su's side his servant, Chang, who with tears in his eyes took his young master's hand

"Teacher! We did not know what had happened to you," he said "We have spent the whole night searching and praying for your safety"

On that Sunday, with Sing Su under lock and key in the yamen, and their modest little sanctuary in ruins and smouldering from the fires of yesterday, a small company of Chinese Christians met bravely together in the house of one of them, and there worshipped the God so recently made known to them by the despised, detested foreigner Nor should it be forgotten that in Chinese houses of the poorer type there is little privacy or protection from the public gaze

Sing Su and his companions remained shut up in the yamen till evening, and were then escorted by a small band of soldiers over to the River's Heart, the island in the middle of the river on which to this day stands the British consulate But with a difference In those times the consul was housed in a temple, picturesque indeed, but riddled with white ants Now, when a consul functions no longer in that City-of-the-South, the consulate, built with memories of those earlier, harder days, stands like a fortress, in stone!

In the consulate the refugees awaited the *Eternal Peace*—the steamship *Yung-Ning*—which took them away for a change of air and scenery The consul went also, but he, poor man was almost immediately sent a thousand miles up the Yangtsze, to open to foreign trade and residence the Port of Chungking There his career was again interrupted by a riot, from which he escaped with greater difficulty this time and some damage, for his ankle was broken in his hasty escape over the city wall The luggage of the *Yung Ning's* passengers to Shanghai on this occasion was almost nil Sing Su had only the white drill suit in which he stood with the exception of a new coarse red blanket supplied by the magistrate and charged for by the said gentleman at an enhanced rate when accounts

were finally settled between the British and the Chinese Governments.

The Veteran in our Service was wont waggishly to assert that when Sing Su left his blazing home for the yamen on that eventful fourth of October 1884, he had, tied round his neck, his most valued possession, namely, a hand-painted plaque which had been sent him by me from England—a form of art in vogue amongst young ladies in Victoria's days. But no plaque survived in confirmation.

CHAPTER II RIVER'S HEART

EARLY on New Year's Day, 1885, our *Eternal Peace* dropped her anchor in mid-stream, opposite to the busy North Gate of the City-of-the-South. Near her, also in mid-stream, lay the River's Heart, as the Chinese picturesquely call the island. Here, as I have said, lived the British consul, and Sing Su rowed off to ask the fulfilment of the consul's promise, which was that we might temporarily take up our abode in the consular office there on the island. To Sing Su's great relief, a couple of small rooms in what was nothing more than a detached cottage on the river's edge were granted to us, two distressed British subjects. This saved us the anxiety of not knowing where we should lay our heads that night. To tell the truth, Sing Su had not confessed to me the possibility of that other alternative. The same day, while struggling with the further problem of where to bestow all our goods, the sleeping-room being little bigger than my packing-cases, the consul himself appeared. An entire stranger to me, he abruptly opened communications.

"Come to tiffin," he said simply.

We were cordially welcomed by his wife, a young Swiss lady, also a new arrival in China, which gave us much in common. Before tiffin was over, we were invited to dinner that night and breakfast the next day. Indeed, both our consul and his wife proved themselves to be true friends in need, the lady later on vigorously plying her needle to supply my hot-weather wardrobe; for my own elaborate confections were not only unsuited but also unendurable in the heat of a semi-tropical summer. They both came and helped to unpack my boxes, and were as excited as ourselves when one article after another came forth: mementoes of home and England.

Alas, the more difficult task of finding a place in which to store all the things remained when they had departed. For days chaos reigned, amidst which was but one inspiring object—an English vase holding a bunch of lovely pink monthly roses from the consul's garden. They stood, in their ordered

beauty, a silent protest against the confusion. Meanwhile, we felt ourselves extremely fortunate in having this weather-tight brick-built shelter. A Chinese house was the only alternative, even if love or money could have procured one for us.

The city was a good quarter of an hour's row away, and this short distance created a sense of security. Often, while I slept, Sing Su would start up in the night and go out to listen: to assure himself that any unusual sounds coming across the water did not mean more mischief for us. Often, too, we planned how we could fly for our lives, with, I must say, scant hope of success. As it turned out, there was no occasion. One drawback to our life did I hate: the presence of the impudent rats, whose familiarity bordered on contempt, and who paid us daily as well as nightly visits. At night they nibbled the candle close at my head, waking me with their gambols, and during the day they sometimes impelled me to jump on to the table. But this was better than the experience of the Chinese lad for whose thumb I made later a bread poultice. He came next day, minus the poultice, explaining that the rats had eaten it in the night while he slept. I believed him.

I was charmed with the scenery outside our door. This little island with its green trees, although not indeed "set in a silver sea"—the water was too muddy for that—was a pretty object, methought, as it lay almost in the centre of the mile-wide tidal river which encircled it. At each end was a big grassy mound, whereon, sentinel-like, to this day stand two ancient pagodas, which were erected ages ago, "to keep the River's Heart from floating away." The typhoons of centuries had failed to uproot them, but the relentless hand of time was urging to a surer if slower decay.

The ancient history of the River's Heart, and that of the City-of-the-South—the latter divided from it by half a mile of water—digs deep in China's past. More than six hundred and fifty years ago, when China was disrupted and the Emperor Kang carried from his capital, Hangchow, to Peking by the conquering Mongols, his two younger brothers were sent to the City-of-the-South for safety. Here the elder of the two boys was enthroned in Kang's place under the title of Tuan Tsung, and here he reigned for a short time before fleeing south. In tem-

behind which stands the principal entrance to the city—the North Gate Further up the bank of the river, with its road under the lee of the wall, is the Salt Gate, where the boats which carry that valued commodity up-stream on its journey into the interior must stop and pay their dues, or woe betide them Here there is occasionally a serious passage of arms in which, mayhap, some would be salt smuggler or excise officer loses his life Another length of fine wall brings us to the West Gate with its high *tung erh*, or pavilion, after which the wall turns inland and is lost to view from the island

The river continues its meanderings among range after range of bare but beautiful hills, some of which have temples perched on their lofty summits Some ranges were so high, albeit snowless, that we began to give them alpine names until we found that we had been anticipated by our old American resident, who had already bestowed names we could not presume to alter. Grace Mount was well known, and named after the plucky earliest British lady who came to the City of the South To me was quickly allotted the lofty Lucy Range, in which the highest peak, with a temple built on its tiny plateau, and visible from long distances, became known as Dorothy Peak when my baby daughter arrived Only one mountain, and that down river, could be spared to a man—but what a man! The famous British organizer of the Chinese Maritime Customs stands memorialized there in Hart Peak"

Quite early during our residence on the island I received a shock "I want you to cut my hair," Sing Su said to me in a casual tone

"But," I cried, "I cannot! I have never done such a thing I am quite incompetent, and should make you look as if you had had a basin put round your head"

My protests were in vain I was informed, and rather peremptorily as I thought, that my worst would be better than the uninstructed Chinese barber's best, even if such an operator existed

In mock despair I accepted the scissors, and for one hour snipped away cautiously at the thick dark crop for the time oblivious of seven keenly interested Chinese women who had come over from the city to 'look see' me With noses

flattened against the window panes they became as engrossed as myself in my performance They then and there came to a decision loud enough for us to hear

' In the outside barbarian red haired country, evidently the women are the barbers said they

So much for hasty judgments

But mark the sequel My friend the consul s wife had an Eton crop and urged that I should follow her example It was so clean and cooling in the heat to be able to put one s head into a bowl of water day or night she urged It was a tempting suggestion But such a fashion then unheard of especially among Chinese women raised grave doubts as to the expediency of my yielding So Sing Su and I went into the city to consult the doyenne of our ladies she being the original of Grace Mount After due deliberation the lady pronounced judgment

indeed long after that, the man I came to sympathize most with was the British consul. His service demanded, in the first place, that he be a man of attainments, at the head of the list in examinations before leaving England. Yet, as likely as not, in China he would find himself stationed in some quiet, far-distant spot, or on a little island like the River's Heart. Here, usually, his duties were few, unlimited time was on his hands, and he was thrown entirely on his own resources. These sometimes sufficed. One of our consuls hailed his monotonous existence as a glorious opportunity for writing books on his former travels. Another seized the chance and became an authority on the fauna and flora of the outlandish corner of the empire to which he was sent.

Having passed through the various stages of Assistant, Vice-consul, etc., a consul was at last fully-fledged, and was appointed —in those days with the imprimatur of Queen Victoria—to a Port. This was designated as his, although as likely as not he might never do duty there, but in some other consul's Port. Which seems strange and paradoxical.

Unlike Sing Su, our consul had generally no particular interest in the city, or the people. His dealings with the officials were normally limited to periodic visits, and the exchange of presents and courtesies at the New Year. Is it to be wondered at that occasionally the consul developed eccentricities, and had to fight to keep his soul alive? One consul, little in stature but great in spirit, religiously put on his dress-suit every evening for dinner, whether at home on the River's Heart or up-stream in a primitive house-boat: to remind himself that he was still a clean English gentleman. Yet another made a hobby of taking the time of day by the sun: after which

One new consul arrived with the nickname "Mad" before his Christian name He was sane enough when he called on us, only the frayed edges of his overcoat announcing him to be superior to outward show Needless to say, he was unmarried It was he who invited the captain and steamer officers to lunch in unusual terms

"If there is little to eat, there will be plenty to drink!" Was he referring to the river water?

Yet it was not this so called "mad" consul who employed his redundant leisure in practising the old fashioned art of netting, and who boiled his own handkerchiefs in a little copper pan, but another

Not that eccentricities are the distinguishing monopoly of consular officers

"Missionaries, you know, can be very trying," said a well known missionary to me lately When I asked how, he instanced the man who, on however mundane business, signed himself invariably, "Yours in Christ" And I recalled the reception which a consul and his wife received from the unmarried missionary lady whom they invited to dine, with the rest of the British community, at the consulate on the River's Heart, the occasion being Queen Victoria's birthday

"No," was her blunt response 'I did not come to China to go out to dine I will stay at home and pray for Her Gracious Majesty" Which drew from the consul the rejoinder that he did not see what that had to do with his dinner party

Many years ago, in a South Kensington hotel a name in the letter rack arrested me the name of Margary The letter was claimed by two ladies in black who mounted the stairs at the same time as myself

"Excuse me, is your name Margary? I ventured to ask

"Yes," came the reply

"Did you ever have a relative——? I hesitated, and the sentence was finished for me

"Who was killed in China? He was our brother'

Margary was a young promising consular officer who was murdered on the borders of China and Burma, at Manwyne, in February 1873 at the instigation of Chinese officials He was sent from Peking on that five months' journey by the British

Government to be the guide and interpreter of a British Commission which was surveying the trade route Margary crossed the border into Burma and met the Commission But they then received rumours of possible trouble and resistance to a further progress into China, although under Imperial sanction Speaking Chinese, and hoping to ensure the safety of the Commission, Margary returned alone over the border He fell into an ambush and was killed—a tragic fate for a brave young spirit

In later talks with the sisters, I learnt more about Margary On that long solitary journey to the Burmese frontier from which he never returned, young Margary wrote to his mother "On this long, long trek I have found myself, in the highest sense of the words"

This came to be their supreme consolation, and so they felt they had never really lost him Once they told me also, when stationed in Formosa a Chinese junk was wrecked off the coast Margary swam out to the doomed boat in an attempt to save the lives of the crew On nearing the ship a big black cat sprang off the ship on to Margary's shoulders, as keen on saving its life as any human But, oh, the claws!

All down the years I was indebted to our consuls and their wives for unexpected pleasures, as, for instance, when the ill-fated German gunboat *Iltis* came up our Bowl River and anchored near the River's Heart Sing Su was, as usual, up in the country, but I went over to the River's Heart and lunched at the consulate with Captain Braun and his officers I was impressed by the exceeding stiffness of the deportment of the German officers, from which they allowed themselves not a moment's respite either while at lunch or when, later, they duly paid a call on us in the city

Alas! From the City of the South they went straight to their death, only one surviving to tell the story Off the Shantung coast they encountered a terrific typhoon and knew the *Iltis* was doomed The story goes that gathering on deck, they all joined hands, sang of their devotion to the Fatherland, and then sank into the terrible deeps A fine monument was erected on the Shanghai Bund to the *Iltis* and to the memory of these brave men—representatives, like us, of a far country.

There was an afternoon service which reduced me to imbecility. Mr. Yang preached, and remained sublimely, or perversely, unconscious of Sing Su's efforts to induce him to bring his remarks to an end. Pressure on his foot, the last hymn ostentatiously placed open before him, were in vain, and both native and foreigner had to endure to the long-delayed end. When that arrived, what Sing Su could do, he did. "You spoke just one hour too long!" said he to Mr. Yang.

Work had to be resumed with caution. We tried to be in evidence as little as possible. Daily expeditions had to be made into the city, but we kept to the side streets, and for a long time avoided the rowdy suburbs outside the East Gate. The first time we ventured there, more things than bad words were thrown at us. Cantonese soldiers filled the city, still awaiting those tardy French: and we feared them more than the citizens. They would rudely push against us in the street, and once Sing Su narrowly escaped capture by them. When he came back to the island one day I asked:

"What has become of your pearl button? It looks as if it had been torn from your jacket."

He told me the story. He had been on a business appointment with two Chinese gentlemen outside one of the seven gates of the city. On finishing his business, he left them, intending to come home the nearest way, which was through the East Gate. He was on his pony, a mettlesome little Mongolian creature. Now the ordinary folk were always civil to us, and they had also good reason to dislike heartily those Cantonese soldiers, who a few nights before had all but killed five poor harmless junksmen. The last time our consul went to a certain part of the city, they had shouted after him: "Kill the foreigner! Kill the foreigner!"

Sing Su was a little way up the street when he found himself in the midst of a band of these Cantonese soldiers. It was at once made plain to him that they were excited and not friendly. One soldier seized his reins, another his leg and his jacket. Being defenceless, he thought it wisest to cut and run; so, urging his pony forward, he broke free, leaving his button in their hands. But further up the street, he saw a larger number of soldiers in front of a temple where, probably, a play with direct

incentives to violent hatred of foreigners was proceeding. Fearing more trouble, he instantly decided to avoid this second group by turning back Winding the reins round his hands, to prevent them being caught, and spurring his willing pony to gallant effort, he dashed swiftly through the soldiers who had previously laid hands on him and taken prisoner his button For their own safety's sake, they had now to stand aside as the pair rushed through But they yelled and re-yelled their chagrin and, after the fashion of the baser sort, in base vocabulary

Our worst trial was that for the first three months—which seemed like three years—the outside world would have nothing to say to us Not a single communication from England or Shanghai, and only one letter arrived from Ningpo, brought overland by a running Chinese postman Nor did we much like the news it contained Major Watson, an Australian resident in Ningpo, who had fought under General Gordon during the Taiping Rebellion, wrote

" Here we are hourly expecting a rising against us Every foreigner, British or European, living on the bank of the river has a ' sampan ' at his door, packed with food and clothing for his wife and children, ready at a moment's notice, day or night, to hurry them off to the English gunboat lying as near as possible in the river "

This happened forty years and more ago, but I can still see the gleam in brave Madam Grace's blue eyes, and hear her constrained laugh when she read us this letter as we three met on the site of our projected buildings Not a comment was made, but each knew what the other thought We had no such protection One at least of the three wished there had been, and all felt very much like rats in a hole

During my twenty five years in the City-of the-South I never heard a single protest against the rare visits of a British, or other foreign, gunboat If the officials were friendly, its presence helped them in their duty of protecting the foreigner When superstitious ignorant mobs exceeded their power to control, the gunboats at least represented law and order The personnel were like lambs in a field for quiet behaviour, unless law and order were violently set at naught But alas! In those days very often the officials were not friendly, and it was

this attitude of theirs which constituted our real need of outside protection. The citizens, on the other hand, hailed with satisfaction the chance of disposing of their produce and manufacture at enhanced prices to the visiting crews.

The sailors on the small gunboat which came perhaps once in three years were allowed occasionally to stretch their legs on shore, and usually comported themselves with credit to the foreign residents. Sad to relate, there happened one exception. A handful of them, and—as I can vouch—from a splendidly disciplined British gunboat, made too close an acquaintance with the strong waters, probably Bass, of a certain shop in our Big Street. With profit to the dealer, but disaster to themselves, the tars cleared out his stock. In their subsequent rollings back to the ship they came in sight of a young English lady missionary, whom they vociferously hailed as a fellow-countrywoman. Seeing her terror, kindly Chinese interposed their persons, enabling her, ready to weep with shame and humiliation, to escape down a side street. But mark the *dénouement*. Their captain let loose the vials of his righteous wrath, forbade further leave ashore during the rest of their three weeks' stay, and every night Chinese and foreigners heard, across the quiet waters, the delinquents hauled out of their berths at 2 A.M., to dress ship!

The continued absence of *Eternal Peace*, coupled with the lack of stores which she normally would have brought us, such as beef and mutton, potatoes, white sugar, butter, wheat-flour, etc., began to take toll of me. I felt starved. I had not then had enough experience of native produce to know how to make the best of it. Consequently we made far too intimate an acquaintance with the various sections of a Chinese pig and the undersized local chickens. Both became nauseating. "Stores" of all kinds ran so low that we instituted an exchange and mart. The consul would appear at our door, in his hand a tin of French butter which he was willing to sacrifice for Scotch oatmeal, and so on. The community inside the city, consisting of the Commissioner of Customs and his assistant, and the four or five missionaries, were in no better plight. They met daily on the hill, till "the old time and the old place" passed into a byword. As they strained their eyes seaward, looking

for the faint blue line of smoke, constant disappointment led them to fear that *Eternal Peace* would never steam up the river again.

Our enforced isolation on the River's Heart had one advantage. It gave us better opportunities to explore the neighbourhood than we ever had again. The City-of-the-South is considered to be one of the most picturesque of Chinese cities, and I have heard it grandiloquently called the Venice of China. We certainly made the most of its river, charming scenery, and encircling hills, thereby provoking sarcastic comments from the Commissioner. "You cannot eat hills. A club would be more satisfying," he said.

Our city was also said to be among the cleanest of Chinese cities. Faint praise this perhaps, and I doubt the truth of it. Open cesspools are frequent in the streets, and, at certain seasons of the year especially, fertilizing operations thicken and pollute the air, for the farmers make use of their malodorous contents on their fields. But I spare you. Sanitation is unknown, and drainage, save into the canals, is non-existent. Even in 1920 an Englishwoman visiting the city used to cry out to her more hardened hostess, as buckets of night-soil were being carried past: "Tell me, dear, when I can take my handkerchief from my face!"

It is not surprising that epidemics of cholera and dysentery are common, and sweep away multitudes almost yearly.

To vary the monotony and stifle the longing for letters and a good square meal, we crossed the river one afternoon, went through the city, and made an expedition to Cemetery Valley, a picturesque Chinese burial-ground lying betwixt the low hills situated about a mile outside the Hill-foot Gate. As we sat there, I, for one, not a little disconsolate, a whistle broke the silence, so shrill, so penetrating and prolonged, that it seemed to say, "Behold me—at last!" We sprang to our feet.

"*Eternal Peace*! The *Yung-Ning*!" we exclaimed.

True enough: for over the distant city buildings we could discern the top of her masts, whereat we shouted "Hurrah!" In less time than it takes to write, Sing Su was off like the wind on his pony, leaving me to follow as fast as the willing legs of my two chair-bearers could swing along.

Alack! Our fears were realized As Sing Su approached the North Gate, outside which the steamer lay, he met every servant he knew hurrying home with legs of mutton, roasts of beef, and other precious "stores," including my much desired potatoes He went aboard "Everything has gone in the way of provisions except potatoes" he was told

In vain he besought the Chinese steward

"Mississee ill I must indeed have something for her"

The steward insisted that his larder had been cleared out, and he had barely enough left to feed the European officers on the return journey to Shanghai As Sing Su turned sadly away, the heart of the steward relented, for he added

"I might, perhaps, let you have a brace of woodcock"

"Anything," was the eager rejoinder The small birds were brought home in triumph and ever since "woodcock" has been a name to conjure with in our household Potatoes I feasted upon three times a day as long as they lasted Nor must I neglect to add that when our lack was made known, other members of the community gladly shared their beef and mutton with us

Given time, one learns how excellent Chinese food can be though the exhibition of it, as seen in the streets, does not appeal to the foreigner In the Big Street, narrow and crowded as it was, one's olfactory nerves were anything but gratified by the rank odours arising from the open cooking stoves The look of their pans of mahogany coloured boiling fat, the oil of the tea plant berry, in which so many of the cakes and the ducks and the chickens were fried, was decidedly unappetizing Add to this the smell and the blinding smoke, and one had a combination which produced dislike as well as blurred the vision The moment one stepped ashore and entered the North Gate, there was the open market for dried fish with its clinging smell Huge barrels of fish, thickly encrusted with coarse salt or lying in brine, lined both sides of the congested narrow street There were baskets of sun-dried shrimps too tiny ever to be skinned, and producing merely a slight flavour in the mouth There were open trays of "tape fish," just a few inches wide, yet so long as almost to be sold by the yard

Further on came the butchers' stalls with pork thereon,

which, particularly in the hot weather, presented a measly and inflated appearance Under the stalls might be a black brother porker, unwittingly striving to fit, or fat, himself for the board above by means of any unsavoury remnants he could pick up beneath it Dried ducks and geese, saffron coloured fried chickens, strings of repellent queer coloured beef, cakes of some dark brown composition like burnt parkin, great slabs of dingy-looking blancmange—made from beans, and which I learned to like all these and more met the eye as we walked along the principal street To the new arrival, these viands appear still, as to me then, eminently disagreeable, and shout for the sanitary inspector But time modifies one's ideas, and I have eaten with pleasure some formerly despised dainties—such as "field-chicken,' as frogs are euphemistically called Nor do I forget the emphasis with which a dainty Chinese woman friend once said

'There are delicious eatables to be had here in our City of-the-South"

The quiet implication was

"Of which you dear madam, are in total ignorance

CHAPTER IV A FRIGHT AND A SÉANCE

I HAD a fright about this time on one of our daily peregrinations to the city from the River's Heart We both had though neither confided it to the other

After crossing the river we set out for the temporary Chinese quarters of Madam Grace and her redoubtable husband As we proceeded along one of the quieter streets, which are more like lanes for narrowness than streets, we came to a group of men who stood furiously gesticulating without apparent reason As we passed them, their demeanour to us was more than unpleasant it was belligerent I was far from reassured when we saw—a little ahead—another and similar group also loudly declaiming and standing as if awaiting us Not a word passed between Sing Su and myself but I felt my face growing redder and redder

"We are between the devil and the deep sea,' thought I

When the first group, now behind us started running in our direction, I expected nothing less than that they were bent on our destruction The strength completely left my limbs How I walked on I knew not When, close at our heels the two groups joined forces and rushed pell mell up a side lane' on some other ploy, my relief was unspeakable In extenuation of my fears may I plead that the Riot was yet only six months behind us and that I was a tenderfoot ?

Meanwhile the great concern of rebuilding made progress The property destroyed in the Riot had been bought at a price a heavy one, too With the compensation given by the Chinese Government additional funds from home, and some of our own, we vastly improved on our former position the proper sequence after one has been burnt out ! "Petticoat Lane" was an admirable centre for work but unhealthy and almost impossible as a dwelling place for Westerners with views about fresh air In the terrible heat of summer the street was close and ill smelling The high walls of the surrounding buildings kept off good air, but freely admitted bad from the constant supply of night soil boats Some of these were anchored in that locality, and others were continually being propelled along the canal which ran parallel to the lane and thence away

off into the countryside Also Sing Su wanted the ground on which his house had formerly stood for a future large city church, of which he dreamed dreams

The buying of land for a new house in an open part of the city, coupled with the building of a moderate sized church on the old site, was a frantic business for twenty-four-year old Sing Su His total lack of architectural knowledge, of contracts, of Chinese workmen, and—last but not least—his imperfect acquaintance with the language, was enough to daunt the stoutest heart One evening, eight or ten master-workmen came over to the River's Heart to settle contracts and filled, standing, our small room to overflowing As they shouted and argued with each other and Sing Su at the top of their strident voices, it was Bedlam I feared they would come to a free fight and what then? How a soft toned foreigner could evolve the slightest sense out of such Babel like proceedings I could not comprehend Apparently he succeeded Doubtless these were the methods whereby Sing Su acquired his acknowledged mastery of the dialect And years later a Chinese scholar on a visit to England announced triumphantly, but in public

"Sing Su! Why, he can outslang any of us!"

Another was anxious to impress his Chinese listeners with his foreign friend s proficiency

"He even understands our swear words," he remarked

Save us from our friends!

He, however, thoughtfully saved Sing Su's face by adding

"Yet he never uses them"

Lazy incompetent foremen dishonest contractors, and bad workmen all combined to make the building period one of disquiet and incessant unpleasantness But the buildings grew

Meanwhile on our island I had my own adventures One day I had a strange experience all to myself It was a frequent occurrence for devout Chinese to come over from the city to worship at one or more of the pretentious temples on River's Heart Built up to our cottage however, was what I suppose I must name a temple, though it was nothing better than a bare neglected shed in which an old dirty table did duty as an altar, and on which were a number of big, gaudy, decrepit old gods

Looking out of the window, across the river, I spied a number of boats approaching, full of people and of priests, whom I recognized by their long yellow robes Evidently something of importance was afoot, and being greedy of new happenings, I watched to see what would transpire Being alone I took the precaution of pulling down the blinds so as to see and yet remain unseen

On the little grass plot in front of the shed the priests proceeded to put up their own table Upon it they spread various offerings as sacrifices, such as fruit, wine, dried fish, confectionery, etc , and with them had come a big strong man, clad in a clean white robe After a number of prayers chanted by the others, this man took his seat in the chair which they had placed inside the narrow shed of the temple The priests and the people then knelt down on the little grass plot in front, and the head priests again began to chant prayers They drawled out the object of their visit in a sing song voice, the people at regular intervals bowing their heads to the ground in confirmation of the utterances

This continued for some time Then the white robed man in the chair began to move uneasily The priests took no notice but chanted on monotonously By and by he began to roll about and throw his body into every sort of contortion until, with purple face and eyes starting out of his head, he seemed in an agony I grew alarmed, expecting him to have a fit He looked like one possessed Yet still, apparently heedless, the priests drawled on

At last, and suddenly, the man sprang out of his chair and rushed wildly about The priests seized and tried to control him In the end he gave one final spring and sank, utterly exhausted, into his chair Next he stretched himself out, and lay as stiff as a board Presently he began to yell out, in a startling voice, a few monosyllables, to which the priests listened with strained attention When he had ceased speaking, lighted paper—the imitation silver paper money—was waved over and around him This apparently restored him to his normal condition, upon which the whole company packed up their accessories and took their departure

In one respect the Chinese are far more generous than we are

To each person we allot one soul: they portion out, not one but three souls, with seven animal spirits in addition When a man is ill, it is because one of his three souls has been seized by one of the myriads of demons with which, as an old Chinese gentleman asseverated to Sing Su, China swarms

"Christianity having driven the devils out of England," so his commentary ran, "they have all fled to China!"

The lost soul, when a man is ill, has been carried off to the cave where the demon lives But demons are too crafty for ordinary people to know which particular one has wrought the evil and priests must be called to help in finding out They, in *their turn, often resort to a spirit medium, such as the one* I saw He is doubtless prompted beforehand which temple he shall indicate, and plays his part well with the astounding effect which I had witnessed It was his duty to discover, by the aid of a superior god, exactly where the lost soul was held in durance Like our monks of old, the priests in China in bygone years erected temples in beautiful spots, and also in places *where evil spirits were supposed to live* When *that distraught* medium shouted those few words, I found out later that he named a temple where there is a cave in which lived a demon The priests directed the distressed family to that temple, *where they would have to make further efforts and offerings to* induce the evil one to release the captive soul

It is touching to see, as I have seen, mother, wife, or daughter, or perhaps *all three, crying earnestly into such a cave at the* back of a temple the name of the lost one's soul, beseeching it to return The necessary incantations having been gone through at the front of the temple, the relatives go to the cave at the back, hold out a coat belonging to the sick member of the family close to its mouth

"Come back! Come back!" they call

Garment in hand they wait until they think the soul has entered it, and then hurriedly putting the bundled up coat beneath their own clothes, and holding an open umbrella closely *over themselves to protect it still further, they hasten back to* the sick room On the way they walk close together to prevent the soul's escape, they talk to it audibly to comfort and calm it When home is reached all doors and windows being shut,

and the bed-curtains let down, they throw the precious coat over the sick one, in the pathetic hope that its supposed living inmate will re-enter the patient and all will be well

If all is not well, then it is evident some mistake has been made They have sacrificed to the wrong demon, or gone to the wrong temple-cave If they have money, or can borrow, they try to rectify their mistake by doing the same things over again elsewhere A costly, nay, at times a ruinous business but—all that a man hath will he give for his life!

Sing Su and I once made an expedition to Dorothy Peak, a hard precipitous climb On the top we found a tiny plateau whereon stands a temple, visible for a long distance While resting and feasting our eyes on the wide prospect, we saw a man come toiling up Baskets hung from his shoulders, containing the usual objects offered to idols Curious as to why he had made such a difficult journey, seeing that temples and shrines abounded below, we questioned him This he informed us was a last resort, on behalf of a sick member of his family Having failed to obtain a favourable reply from the numerous temples which he had tried below, he had come hither also Verily the Chinese are willing to pay for their religion though rather from fear than love, one gathers

When I watched from behind my drawn blind that early day on the River's Heart, I had no idea of what I had been the spectator It was later that I learned it was a Chinese spiritualistic séance A few years afterwards I woke to the fact that the same kind of séance went on in a little temple just over the wall of our new White House in the city On the second occasion I could not see but only hear, the brass tinkling instruments and the shrill voices This spirit medium, I was told, was a woman, who had two female divinities inhabiting her shrine From the varying, penetrating sounds of her voice, I gathered this medium in her trances held a conversation impersonating first one of these spirits in a high falsetto voice, and then the other in deeper tones

So it went on And so it still goes on And have we not something very much akin to it in the West?

CHAPTER V ON LEARNING HOW TO TALK, BUT NOT HOW TO BAKE

MEANWHILE, like the farmer's wife, I was dumb, dumb, dumb I could neither speak nor be spoken to, apart from the few Europeans And I needed to talk Oh, how I needed! Sing Su gave me my first lesson in Chinese, which consisted in counting up to ten The sounds I had to imitate were weird in my ears, and seemed unhealthy to my throat I made little progress with "five" until told that in our dialect I must pronounce it "as if a pig were grunting" One, seven, eight, and ten pleased me better each of these requiring a sort of run up the scale The word "cow" was the cause of excessive stumbling, for it began, and seemed to end gutturally As a Yorkshire woman, I thought I knew something about uncouth sounds, but in "cow" I failed miserably At last Sing Su made me a speech, rather brusquely, I thought

"It is no use expecting to speak Chinese with a cultured English accent What you must do, is to speak it as the people of the place speak it The word for 'cow'—*ngao*—they utter almost after the call of the animal itself · that is, in the throat, and with the mouth wide open"

Sing Su soon cast me off as a pupil, leaving me to sink or swim I did both Indeed, he had more pressing business superintending our new buildings in the city, and he returned to the River's Heart only for meals

He found me a Chinese substitute, but one more inadequate to my needs it were hard to imagine In the first place, I could speak no Chinese, he could speak no English There was no primer or simple book with which I could start, so we just sat In front of us we had a Mandarin Bible, a book which bore no relation to the needs of our daily life in word or sound, being in the Chinese official language which is entirely different from the dialect spoken in our City-of the South Sing Su had taught himself to talk by going round his room with his so-called teacher, pointing at the various objects and asking in Chinese fashion, "Called what name?"

There was no book in existence which could tell him the answer When the cook demanded of a new comer what he

would eat for dinner, he might draw his hand across his throat and crow lustily. Such difficulties led Sing Su to begin jotting down how he thought the names of things in Chinese could be written if spelled with our Western alphabet, or roman letters, as had been attempted elsewhere.

The only teacher available for me had the demerit of also being an opium-smoker; and this, aided by the unutterable dreariness of the lesson, caused him frequently to fall asleep. Whereupon I would pull his sleeve—on which I occasionally beheld creeping things which impelled me to shrink away.

"Waken, Teacher!" I would cry.

He died; but not, believe me, until some time after he and I had parted company.

There are certain difficulties in China which well-nigh pass the wit of the Westerner to circumvent. Ordinary people like myself, and perhaps sinologues too, will say the Chinese language is one of them, that is, if any one proposes to read, write, or speak it well. It is true the "characters," as we generally call the ideographs, have well-defined meanings, and can be read and understood all over China. But one great drawback is that only a tiny fraction, not five per cent., of the people are sufficiently educated to read and write their own tongue. Possibly this accounts for the almost superstitious reverence paid by ignorant and unlearned Chinese to their "characters" or written words. Paper on which they have been inscribed must not be put to ignoble uses. Indeed a man is paid to go about the streets picking up with a long fork all stray pieces of paper on which characters have been written, to save them from the desecration of being trodden under foot. Ultimately these are burnt, ceremoniously, and with incense.

The spoken language has its difficulties also In the first place there is "Mandarin" or the court language. This is the spoken tongue of the Northern half of China, but with very varying pronunciation in different localities, that of Peking being considered the best. Mandarin can also be written in "character," but until recent years there was no extensive literature in Mandarin, because it formed no part of a scholar's equipment. Lately, however, an earnest attempt has been made to raise the spoken Chinese various dialects, especially

Mandarin, to the status of a literary or book language It is certain, in the process of time, that these spoken dialects must form their book or literary language Such has been the case in Europe Centuries ago, Latin was the written language of Europe, but it was superseded by the gradual formation of literatures in the vulgar tongue of the various nations In like manner, Wenli, the book language—the "Latin" of China—also promises to be superseded by at least one of the important dialects of China probably by some form of Mandarin

Not content with the spoken Mandarin of the North of China, the South bristles with a formidable array of these so called dialects But each is in effect worthy the name of a language, for each is spoken by millions of people Offhand I can count seven of these "dialects" of the South Shanghai, Ningpo, Wenchow, Fukien, Swatow, Amoy, Canton Numerous resemblances in word sounds may be discovered, but the total difference in most sounds is so great that no speaker of any one of them can understand a speaker of another

When Sing Su reached Hong-Kong in 1882, it was Sunday, and he went to a Chinese church by way of introducing himself to the Chinese language The preacher was a Cantonese The hop, skip, jump, and bite of his talk so appalled the solitary young man that in the middle of the sermon he bowed his head in his hands

"Oh God, however shall I learn such a jerky language?" he ejaculated to himself But, after all, Cantonese was not the language given him to learn!

Fortunately the idiom or construction of sentences, is the same everywhere Books are written in Wenli, the "Latin" of China Thus in South China the most populated half of the country, a Westerner desiring to serve the people has the necessity laid upon him of learning practically two languages First there is Wenli for his book lore, and then there is the everyday speech of the people among whom he elects to dwell, be they Ningpoese, Cantonese, Wenchowese, etc A few of the dialects had already been reduced to writing by missionaries who used our A B C as their medium, but not so with the dialect of the City-of the-South There Sing Su had practically virgin soil for his efforts in that direction Moreover, the

Mandarin spoken tongue is unknown in South China Strangely enough, however, the New Testament translated into Mandarin by missionaries was found easier to read and understand, both by Chinese and foreigners, than was the orthodox *Wenli* or classical language Consequently this Mandarin New Testament was used by Christian Chinese in the churches . and it was with a copy of this that I and my opium smoking teacher started work

In North China this language of the Mandarin New Testament is the everyday speech of the people Happy are those Westerners whose easier fate sends them in that direction An English friend from Hankow expatiated on my lack of wisdom in choosing the City-of the-South wherein to dwell

" As for me, I can learn a sentence from a Mandarin book, go out in the street and repeat it to any one I may meet, and be understood—which you, with your terrible dialect, cannot possibly do," she remarked

" True, too true," I told her , " but there are compensations My dialect is more endurable than the excessive heat of your summers ! "

It was the dialect into which we had first to grope our way , and by ear only ! The idiom appeared very peculiar, and totally different from our English idiom If there is such a thing as a Chinese grammar, I have never seen it I have been told that there are rules but I do not know any one who can tell me what they are My pressing need was to be able to direct the unenlightened labours of the two raw Chinese men who served us during the day but conveniently disappeared into the void at night, since we had no sort of sleeping accommodation for them on the River's Heart Happily Sing Su had a good ear, and could learn easily through that gate, but mine automatically closed before such unknown sounds as our dialect produced Also I must needs see with my eyes what the written equivalent of the sound looked like on paper, in black and white, before I dared attempt to tell the coolie to wash the floor, or the cook to buy fish Thus, largely for my benefit, a handbook of everyday phrases sprang into being, written with the aid of our friendly old English A B C, but with continental pronunciation

Thus, out of our own exigencies and with the continued use

of our roman letters, there grew a primer, then a hymn book, and last of all a translation of the New Testament itself all in the dialect of the City of the South On the completion of the last, the two of us danced rather than plodded along our usual walk outside the East Gate But much water flowed under our bridges before that auspicious day

Before leaving this subject, altogether too recondite for simple explanation, let me add that Sing Su's system of writing the colloquial speech was so simple, so easily grasped, that both Chinese and Westerners learned it rapidly and used it largely Ten years later, when an English colleague joined us, he could take the hymn book and straight away, though not understanding, sing hymns with the best, to the great puzzlement of the Chinese.

"How comes it," they queried, "that Mr Sea can sing, but cannot talk, Chinese?"

The Chinese have the amiable quality of saving the face of the Westerner by themselves keeping a straight one even at his most ludicrous mistakes, when we should have been convulsed with laughter We all have a store of these mistakes, and I am reminded of the lady who told her cook to buy, as she thought, a dish of strawberries At long last he reappeared, explaining with what difficulty he had obeyed her behest, and presented her with a dish of—sheep's tails! These in China are both large and fat But she received that for which she asked And I would bespeak your sympathy Sing Su said he could always tell when I had been studying Chinese because of the dazed look on my face Small wonder, facing, as I did, two languages, the spoken and the written Either of them alone would have been sufficiently upsetting to a beginner As I have shown before, there was no medium at the outset whereby teacher and learner could exchange even the simplest greetings

Previously Sing Su had had a servant who knew how to cook English food and understood foreign ways of service It was in "the nature of things" as enunciated by Mr Mantalini, that this servant should commit some uncondonable offence and have to be dismissed just before I arrived on the scene Consequently, for a couple of years the trials of housekeeping were to me a nightmare The incredibly difficult task I had of procuring

even ordinary bread that we could eat nearly brought me grey hairs It was humiliating for, in North country fashion, I had been drilled, at the instance not of my mother but of my father, prophetic soul, in almost everything pertaining to a household, including the mysteries of bread making

" The drawing room in the afternoon, but the kitchen in the morning," had been his aphorism concerning his only daughter

In the City-of-the South my difficulty lay in the production of the yeast, which could not be bought, but had to be made afresh every baking occasion Cook and I knew the ingredients to perfection " A pinch of hops, a slice or two of potato, and a teaspoonful of sugar " , these innocent items had to be boiled together, put into a bottle with a little of " the old leaven," and left to ferment till the next day, when the mixture should, properly speaking, have been ready for use All we produced by our combined efforts was bread too bad and sour to eat !

The dough refused to rise in the tins Eat the bread we could not I borrowed bread from all possible lenders, with small hope of repayment, until I was ashamed Yet how we tended, as it were with our lives, that bottle of yeast ! It received more attention than many a babe In the cold weather it was encased in flannel and kept by the stove for fear of a chill It was studied and turned upside down occasionally, and sometimes given a drink at night All in vain I began to look upon yeast-making as the greatest chemical achievement of time Sing Su's description of one of our loaves was literally true " So hard that not a chopper could cut it ! " he declared in later years " Whereupon it served as a footstool After that we threw it into the fire but it refused to burn A brick it went in , a brick it came out "

To me, the ambitious and would be-honoured bread giver, those were bitter and mortifying days Of many failures this was the least understood and one that to this day rouses in me a deep sense of impotence and injury I want to rise and try again

One evening while seated at our unavoidably frugal board, Chang-loa, our then cook—save the mark !—rushed in like a whirlwind He had a sadly pock-marked face and such protruding eyes that a visitor once remarked that he certainly was

not behind the door when eyes were given out In real but comic despair he spread his hands "Another failure with the bread!" he announced "I can swallow it down no longer," that is his failures, not the bread And he forthwith proposed to stop trying We let him

Then, one day, out of the blue there stepped in a Celestial who asked nothing better than to come and do for us what was common knowledge throughout the city that we were unable to do for ourselves make yeast as well as bread Sing Su broke this news with excited mien Ah Djang, I was told, had been brought by a friend of his who explained that he had repented of the delinquencies which had caused his dismissal from a former foreign master Moreover, his peccadilloes had paid so badly that even the nether garments in which he now stood had been borrowed!

Ah Djang was installed in our kitchen—on due promise of future upright dealing His advent was as the coming of Spring He proved to be the happy solution of our commissariat troubles He made bread, and other things, fit for a king Do not be surprised if he reappear in our domestic annals, for he, and, later, his wife also, earned our gratitude by years of good service I gladly lay this affectionate tribute at their devoted feet—one pair of which had been, fashionably but cruelly, bound

"It is the custom," she apologized

IN the piping heat of June 1885 the house that was to be a dear home for twenty-five years was sufficiently ready for habitation We were impatient to be out of our cramped quarters and on to our job Joyfully, but with affection, we bade adieu to our helpful friends on the River's Heart and, our household stuff having preceded us, we were once more rowed across to the City-of-the-South

Not that worries or annoyances were left on the island! When I had come across to the buildings to mark progress, I often found the workmen sitting smoking, contentedly contemplating the work they had not done Sing Su had imported a Ningpo man to varnish floors and doors, because of superior skill and more lasting material Ningpo varnish is famous all over the country One day this man pointed out to us blemishes, and angrily charged the men of the city, whom Sing Su had bargained he should employ, with purposely spoiling his work He also was a "foreigner" in their eyes!

It would be rash to recommend riots as a daily habit, but the one I knew most about had in it a soul of good People said I could not possibly have lived in the house in Petticoat Lane, which Sing Su's predecessor, also youthful had bought with much difficulty Probably its site and insanitary situation accelerated his death after less than three years' service We now had spacious rooms and wide verandas, on the east side of one of which I stole many a good night's sleep, despite the terrible heat of our summer weather We rejoiced in a beautiful view of the hoary, moss-grown, fern fringed city wall which, though broken here and there, climbed up one hillside and ran down another, and had *ting erh* or small pavilions built on its highest points We could not see the river itself, but from our upstairs veranda with the thickly clustered low houses of the east suburb lying between, we had a glorious vista of the long stretch of bare mountains running sharply down to the unseen river's brink on the further bank, amongst which towered Hart Peak Perhaps even more appealing than the beauty of the view was the fact that from our back window upstairs we could see the masts of s s *Eternal Peace* So we knew when she

arrived and when she left even if we failed to hear her cheerful hoot on approach, or blast of farewell on departure

Being young, and having come to stay, we adventured several of our halfpennies, and in our front garden made good concrete paths and a grass lawn for tennis To this lawn the little community, including consul and commissioner, did cheerfully resort, save when torrential rains turned the lawn into a swamp A fast set or two did more to generate a cheerful outlook on life than did the only alternative exercise, a monotonous badly flavoured walk Even the dear souls whose consciences hindered them from making a tennis court of their own came and fought on ours, and were doubly welcome We planted trees, willows and oranges and mulberries, some of which almost grew while we watched We ate of the fruit thereof in a very short time, so rapid is production and fruition in the Turkish-bath season of South China I being chief gardener, we grew the finest and best tomatoes in the world bathed as they were, in intense sunshine

We named our dwelling the White House, for it was white outside and too far away from its more famous namesake to seem impertinent For years the walls inside were also plain whitewash and against the dark shining floors and doors these did not look amiss, especially with a few water-colours to break the spaces As time passed, we progressed, colouring and even painting our walls The sting of whitewash lies in its having to be often repeated, and the mess made by the workmen, with their futile little brushes, appalled me, and lasted almost until the process needed to be repeated

Soon after settling in the city, Sing Su disappeared into the country I perforce spent the nights alone in the house with the exception of my little simple-minded amah In the middle of the night on one of these occasions I was suddenly awakened by blood-curdling shrieks I listened intently expecting to hear wild rushes to the rescue Nothing happened, nobody stirred So I too lay still letting I dare not wait upon I would When the shrill cries came again I could bear it no longer, but sprang up and went out on to the verandah expecting that some shocking misdeed was happening It was a beautifully clear night, a moon illumined the sleeping city, which evidently

refused to share my alarm All I could discern was the moving light of a lantern, carried by some person invisible to me walking along under the wall of our adjoining narrow street Presently the invisible one again emitted the same weird cries, which, coupled with no other demonstration of alarm, reassured me I decided to leave the solution of the mystery till the morning, and went back to bed, but my first question when Amah appeared was as to the meaning of the hideous sounds

I was told that a Chinese gentleman near by had a son dangerously ill To rid him of the evil spirits supposed to be the cause of his condition, the father had risen in the night, put everything eatable outside, and closed all the doors and windows of his dwelling, then had gone about the streets at midnight trying to frighten away the evil spirits by the sounds I had heard He deserved to succeed

There was no escaping the fact that, once in the city, real life began Crowds, mostly women with their attendants, came daily and stayed "half a day," that is, an interminable time The rich were clad in silks and satins, their black hair was gummed down and neatly adorned with pearls, gold pins, and artificial flowers Their faces, from which every misplaced hair had been plucked, by women trained for the purpose, were thickly coated with powder Their lips were so carmined that one suspects the present Western fashion was adopted from theirs of forty years ago On their fingers and wrists were often ornaments of solid gold and silver, for a Chinese woman's dowry was usually sunk in these items, which could easily be turned into cash again if required A Chinese woman once told me she thought little of our foreign jewellery Was it not often hollow, and was it not always made of alloyed gold or silver unlike theirs, which, at its best, is almost pure solid precious metal?

There came to us also the poor, with unadorned homely faces They were clad in clean cotton homespun cloth, and next trousers Nor were the latter always covered by the short pleated skirt of greater respectability Rich or poor were alike in that all had, in different degree, the tiny feet which represented so much pain and suffering, yet of which they were proud The smaller the better Their shoes were hand made

and prettily embroidered, and were often the work of their own fingers, for a woman was useless indeed if she could not make her own shoes, soles included It was an effort for many to walk up our easy bedroom stairs, but they did it, bent on seeing everything We had to disabuse our minds of the idea that an Englishman's home is his castle And who knows what evil reports and rumours and real fears of the machinations of the "foreign devils" were dispelled during those drawn-out visitations? Long afterwards we once called in a bricklayer to a smoky chimney upstairs As I watched him at his work he turned with a grin

"Twenty years ago I helped to build this chimney. What do you think we workmen said you would use such a dark hole for? 'To hide stolen babies in, and make medicine of them,'" he announced Was not electric light stolen from human eyes? He could smile now, however, over the exploded fallacy, for he had apprehended something of the True Light

Once I went to visit our devoted Tsang-ling's wife She had a visitor from the country "To morrow I will take you to see the Sz Mo's house," she presently said to her Turning to me, she added, "To us your house is heaven"

As I walked home I put that remark into my stomach—as is the Chinese phrase—and digested it I vowed that I would never again groan over the double rows of nose-marks on our newly cleaned windows, put there by those who feared to come inside, but dared to look We represented sweetness, cleanliness, light—in short, ingredients of an earthly Paradise which was our accustomed heritage, but which was as yet unattainable by them

About this time we made the acquaintance of a young man of twenty whom we learned to know well, and whose influence in the right direction became considerable His home was a large house in a small family village tucked away, as so many are, in a ravine in the hills When Ah Shah first came to see us, he examined our possessions with the vigilance of a detective I was really concerned when he lighted upon our canteen, and wished I had taken the precaution to lock it up The rows of sharp, shining steel knives therein displayed were palpably ready for diabolical use—on the babies stored in the chimney!

Nothing stopped Ah Shah But when he took hold of the ornamental cover of our American stove, and it came off in his hand, he was terrified and dropped it like a hot brick The bang ought to have broken the only nice thing about the stove, but did not Ah Shah's companion urged the flight of time and the existence of other city joys So at last he left, but regretfully

"I could take pleasure here all day," said he

On Sunday Ah Shah went with us to church, to hear the strange doctrine The bold foreign woman walked ahead, whereas she ought to have come toiling painfully behind her menfolk on her "two and a half inch golden lilies"—her bound feet Unheard by me, Ah Shah asked Sing Su an embarrassing question "What is the queer thing Mrs Su wears sticking out behind? Our women don't have it Would it not look better in front?" he queried

I never elicited the reply he received, but from that day my recently imported "dress improver," my bustle—then in vogue in England—disappeared for ever I burnt the silly thing with difficulty, for the pieces of steel refused to melt

I now began to know some of the women who became, as time moved on, my fast friends Dear little neat, plump, round faced Pai loa Na—so called after her eldest son, Pai loa—was a good soul who withstood every temptation to desert us or our cause She and I have often chuckled together as she has told me of the bodily fear with which she first came to hear what we had to say, and of the dreadful possibilities her neighbours prophesied for her They warned her that if she came once, we should give her medicine that would compel her to come again This we did! Before she learnt to trust the foreigner's one God her fear of evil spirits led her a fine dance As dusk approached, she would shut herself up in her house, not daring to open the door till daylight, lest the demons lurking in the dark streets should rush in and destroy her household She lost her terrors, because a Vision of the Holy One Whom she described as "white and glistening," appeared to her, she said, driving away the evil spirits for ever

Pai loa's mother kept the faith until she died, and life, no less than death, was robbed of its fears for her She was a good

his congregation that on the following Sunday there would be no dinner, but that he would present each of them with a basket —in which to bring their own !

Caring as we did almost more for the trust and confidence of our Chinese than anything else on earth, it was grievous when we began to feel they were suspicious of our motives We denied ourselves many simple comforts in those days lest they should think, or say, that we cared more about our own well-being than about supplying needy Chinese with a free meal once a week One incident reveals the state of my mind at that time At the end of the week I asked Sing Su what I should arrange for our Sunday dinner, he having been longer on the spot than myself

" I am tired of feeble, skinny chicken," he cheerfully replied, " buy a goose ! "

As matters were, this rather alarmed me From the Chinese standpoint a goose was a luxury, though from ours not an extravagant one The cost then, but not now, was about one and sixpence However, I kept my objections to myself, and told the cook to buy the goose, carefully instructing him to prepare it all on the Saturday I expected that thus it would be safely hidden away out of sight in our safe, knowing that our kitchen would be, as it usually was, a rendezvous for a number of our flock Imagine my consternation when I saw at seven o'clock on Sunday morning that detestable cook proudly putting the finishing touches to the goose, and surrounded by an interested group of those whom I least wished to know of its existence

We went to church, and after the service called in at the adjoining church house provided for country visitors Here, amongst others, was the distant, stand-offish Lydia Here, too, was Z-loa, a friendless man we had taken on to our premises and nursed when attacked by typhoid, and who was out for the first time that day

" Is Z-loa staying here for dinner ? " asked Sing Su, happy that Z-loa could thus go a-visiting after his illness

" There is no *p'ai* "—that is, " nothing to eat with the rice " —answered Lydia disdainfully, " for him "

We went home, and I felt discouraged to the last degree I

went upstairs, lay on my bed, and let the waters overflow me At one o'clock the bell rang, and hungry, expectant Sing Su sat down at table and waited, but no Sz Mo appeared Ultimately he sought me, and found me lying there, still in tears

"What is the matter?" he cried Man like, he had been untouched by the things that had cut me to the heart

"It is that goose," I sobbed "I will not touch it"

Then my meaning dawned on him, and sitting down beside me, he began.

"Now look! Don't be foolish We cannot live like the people here, and we are not going to try We shall do what we think right, and leave the consequences"

In the end I was persuaded to go down and partake of the delicacy, than which bitter herbs had been more palatable But it was a sobered meal, and at its close the remainder of the goose was cut into portions, and sent round to one and another of those most likely to need it This cheered me considerably In after years, if I wished to illustrate to Western friends the hardly won confidence of our Chinese friends, I would exclaim

"Nowadays, if I think fit to hang out half a dozen legs of mutton from Shanghai, I can do it with impunity!"

But the result of the various troubles was a defection, which we could ill afford Yet a decrease may be the very best that could happen, though hard to bear at the time if the nucleus left be as small as ours was When we gathered in the new church, which we then accounted large, the congregation was so small, and the atmosphere seemed, to me at least so chilly and depressing that I turned coward "Had we not better return to the small street chapel until our numbers increase?" I queried

Sing Su treated this policy with the contumely it deserved "What! Discourage the loyal ones in that way? Never!

The difficulties were increased a thousand fold by the imperfect understanding which Sing Su then possessed of the people's mentality It was incredibly hard if not impossible to reach the bottom of any happening Privately we each asked ourselves if we, personally, were to blame for this apparent withdrawal of God's sunshine The only cause I could think of was the removal of the house from close, ill smelling

Petticoat Lane to a healthier, and vastly pleasanter, part of the city. If that were it, then the White House might burn. Had it been devoured by the fiery element which yearly destroys so many homes in the City-of-the-South, I should have rejoiced, and been content to live in any miserable building we could obtain. Such is the blessed abandon of youth.

Happily the house did not burn. Its occupancy has long ceased to disturb my mind, for it was certainly a great instrument in keeping us, and others too, alive to carry on.

The prospects darkened rather than lightened. When we left the city for the first time, compelled to visit Ningpo, one of us wondered as we walked down to our little s s. *Eternal Peace*, on an October evening, if it were ever possible to wish to return to such a heart-breaking place and people. In a moment of deep despondency, even Sing Su exclaimed :

" If Chang deserts us, I'll go home."

Then, as if ashamed of such faint-heartedness, he quickly added :

" No ! If he too goes, I will start afresh."

And Chang did not desert us ; nor did we turn tail.

CHAPTER VII CHANG OF THE GOLDEN HEART

DO you ask, Who is Chang?

One of the best men that ever lived He it was who, during the Riot, spent the night in prayer and a vain searching of the streets till, at length, he discovered Sing Su in the yamen where the official had compelled him to stay while the mob, undeterred, worked its sweet will on his premises

When Sing Su went to Shanghai for change of scene, and to meet his future "anchor," Chang went too, and there on arrival I made his acquaintance Now Chang was not as good looking as are many Chinese, but as he stood before me with the deferential air with which he always so mistakenly regarded me, I saw a man who carried well his tall bony frame He was clad in the orthodox loose garments, and was shod with the thick cloth soled working man's shoes of China Not only was his face clean shaven, but the front half of his head also, as was the custom, and his unruly black hair, plaited into a queue or pigtail, was finished off with a black tassel which reached almost to his ankles

His face was plain and yellow, his cheek bones high, his mouth wide Indeed, Inland China was writ large on every line of him How we loved and respected him! Increasingly so as the years rolled on, revealing his worth and his unswerving devotion, not so much to us as to a cause he accounted great Chang, or Gold, was his surname, and had we tried, we could not have invented a better, or one more indicative of his nature Even at first sight there was something about Mr Gold which impressed me and gave me confidence Was it the look of other worldliness, the faculty of, as it were, appraising the value of things in this life in the light of the larger life? Yet later he also proved himself no mean judge of men or motives in this world

Mr Gold owed little or nothing to education or social standing Indeed he was illiterate until he began to study Christian literature So far as I ever learnt, he had not a single relative in the world In business he used to earn two hundred dollars a year, a respectable livelihood in those days He had been a maker of

the gold and silver paper money which, when burned at the grave, provides money for the use of the departed in the next life One cannot tell which to admire most, the ease with which the spirit world could be deceived, or the credulity of the devotees These believed that their gilt paper money, made by the ton, and which no bank or person would accept for practical purposes, was by the mere act of burning transformed into valuable coin of the spirit realm Nor do I know if it was the interminable discourses of Mr Yang—Mr. Willow, in English—or the short ones of young Sing Su that opened the eyes of Chang's understanding What is certain is that, after a short period of listening, his spirit was so stirred by the new ideas that he found he could no longer make his idolatrous paper money To continue would, metaphorically, be to burn his own soul also The eventful day came when Chang with one bold stroke divested himself of his two hundred dollars a year and began life again and as a pedlar

But Chang had a young wife and her mother to feed They, naturally, were up in arms against this summer madness which would assuredly bring the spectre of want to their door If my knowledge of women is correct, they gave him a roasting which was far from metaphysical In Mr Gold's efforts to provide his "inside ones" with their bowls of rice, all pride of place and position went by the board With bamboo carrying pole slung over his unaccustomed shoulder, from which hung the two baskets containing his simple wares, he made long journeys into the country on foot Consider the hardship of it In addition to these tedious journeys taking him out of his well-worn artisan city groove, his absences also deprived him of his much-needed spiritual sustenance Working thus, long and late, he could only earn about sixty or seventy dollars a year Yet he ever contended that, from a worldly point of view, he was now better off "When I earned more, I lost it in gambling and similar vices," he said which I personally find hard to believe from my experience of him

The stars in their courses fought for Chang About this time Sing Su needed help in his house Not a Boy for the nicer work of the house, but a common coolie to wash the floors, sweep the yard, carry the water, clean the shoes, bring in burdens from the

steamer—in a word, to perform every menial task in a house where there was nothing whatever "laid on," and in a land where coolies are literally beasts of burden because there are no other means of getting things done except by man power Believing Chang to be honest, Sing Su offered the post to him at the customary wage of fifty dollars a year, and the post was gladly accepted

Thus, from being a respectable tradesman, Chang accepted duties in the service of the despised foreigner, in order to have the privilege of regular attendance at divine service Afterwards, while living on the River's Heart, our own exigencies led to Chang's being promoted to the position of our cook

"It is a shame to keep a genuinely good man like Chang hiding his light under the bushel of our kitchen," said Sing Su one day "I want to send him out into the country as a colporteur"

No trained servants were to be had and where to find another man willing even to attempt our foreign cooking we had no idea Nevertheless Sing Su called Chang into our little room overlooking the river

"Chang," said he, "we need a new colporteur The wages are the same that you have as our servant, but the work is harder and may often be dangerous, and you will have to bear much insult Will you undertake it?"

I had been there but a few months, and did not know enough of the language to understand what Chang replied But I knew by the sudden light from within which glorified his face what the reply was in essence

"What did he say?' I asked when he had gone

"He says that he rejoices to have the privilege, and will go into the Den of Lions if need be

He had his wish, and was oftener there than was pleasant to us We found a worse cook, and later, on one of their journeys together, Chang confided in Sing Su

"It is difficult to be honest in a foreigner's kitchen," said he

In the cook's hands was the buying of all that was bought This carried with it the great opportunity of over-charging, or "squeezing' a percentage on every article purchased, which percentage varies with the avarice of the cook We will not

enter into the moral of "squeeze" I have heard a Westerner defend it, on the ground of its being a recognized custom, a commission, a percentage, and consonant with inadequate wages I know of a servant who, on being charged with it, retorted that were he serving a Chinese master he should do it to a larger extent, neglecting to state that under a Chinese master he received less than a living wage, and therefore squeezing was expected of him I also know that every Western housewife in China strives to eliminate it to the utmost of her power, that with honest Chang it was a difficulty, and that its practice from the highest to the lowest Chinese officials has been, and still is, the bane of Chinese life Of course, reasons can be given, and excuses, for it During another epoch of rioting in the City of-the-South—this time against their own mandarins—the wife of one of them came to see me, and during our talk told me some interesting things One was that her husband only received as his salary eight hundred dollars, Mexican, a year It was impossible for them to live on this Hence the necessity to squeeze, and together we bemoaned the system that compelled it

I do not know what first drove Sing Su into the countryside Was it a sort of prescience, or was it disappointment with the sophisticated city folk eternally set on gain? Certain it is he went thither as soon as his acquaintance with the language enabled him to avoid a few of the thousand and one pitfalls into which it invites the foreigner to fall On those early expeditions Chang was his one constant companion Together they went in every possible direction in boats, on foot, up hill and down dale When distances were too great, they each rode in a three piece mountain chair This was made simply by tying three pieces of smooth wood together with string, one for the seat, one for a back-rest, and the third with lengthened string, for a foot-rest This provided a comfortable collapsible seat when hanging between light bamboo poles from the shoulders of a couple of sturdy hill men, one in front, the other behind

Together Chang and Sing Su shared the same drenchings, and ate the same local produce with a zest inspired by sharp hunger and long intervals Chang was as much without the superiority complex as are some Westerners To him the Good News was

never a foreign importation, and lost none of its value because brought to him from a far off country, and by the hands of a stranger Whenever an inquiry came—and often without—the two would hie them to one or other of the villages of the plain or hamlets in the hills A countryman out of curiosity would visit us in the city, leaving behind a suggestion that a call on him in his distant home would not be unacceptable The slenderest human clues were eagerly followed Some broke beneath the strain but more often they ended in what was sought—an open-minded community responsive to the best that called to them

Physically it was killing work Not an ounce of comfort or a moment of quiet except when on the road from one place to another Life was a long working picnic, and Sing Su had enough picnics to last him the rest of his days They had irregular meals and little, sometimes no sleep They needed tongues of silver and throats of brass when addressing those big, swaying, curious, pushing noisy, and—it might easily be—dangerous crowds, in village streets or enclosed ancestral temples Once Chang was out alone, breaking new ground On his return I asked what success he had had

"Oh, splendid," was his reply "They would not allow me to go to bed at all!"

They had kept him busy the whole day and night, telling this astonishing story of God's love for every man Yet Chang was no orator Most of his knowledge was gained from his study of the Bible and hymn book When standing up to speak, especially in the city, he would humbly apologize for his lack of culture and ability, until at last Sing Su suggested he had better stop, or they would begin to take him at his own valuation

Chang was selfless I never knew him ask anything for himself, personal considerations lay outside him I can picture him taking, deprecatingly, what was offered, and which was his just due But never by any stretch of imagination can I imagine him asserting his claim to be put on a level with his young "Elder Brother" and beloved friend, in any particular. Rather he would pray

"Oh, that I may be counted worthy to wash the disciples' feet!"

No persecution was too violent, no station too distant, to

frighten Chang When he became a regular in the Christian army, and a servant to his own people, the rule was three weeks in the country and one week at home Again and again, on arriving in the city after an arduous time, Sing Su had to tell him that an imperative cry for help had just come in from some far-away place in precisely the opposite direction Without a moment's hesitation would come Chang's response

"I must go there," he would say

"But you are tired, worn out," urged Sing Su, though, truth to tell, he knew of no other to send To go himself would be to make matters worse very often, like flaunting a red flag in front of a bull Chang would go home—happily to a now sympathetic household—change his clothes, and be off again

In one place, on Sunday, men stood with guns at each end of the village, threatening the lives of any who came to service The people naturally said they were afraid

"Come," said Chang, "and whoever hurts you shall first lay me low" Taking their courage in both hands, they came Chang used the emollient of gentle persuasion, and once more the situation was saved

Alas, at the end of five years a stop was forcibly put to his activities One evening on reaching the river, after a long tramp that tired him to the point of exhaustion, he found no boat to bring him back the further twenty miles to the city After waiting some time he espied a water barge crawling its tardy way citywards where the drought had dried up the wells He was granted a passage, but the only available seat was the narrow thwart on which stands the mast The boat itself was full to the brim with water A weary Chinese can sleep almost anywhere So Chang in his recumbent position had no difficulty in that Alack, the boat gave a jerk! Poor Chang found himself head over heels in the cargo of water Drenched through, as was also the change of clothing he carried in the double ended cotton bag which the travelling Chinese slings over his shoulder, Chang had no choice but to sit for hours in his sodden garments, facing the chilly night wind

Inflammation of the lungs followed, consumption supervened Sad the day and dark the forebodings when, for a month Chang lay at the point of death He won through and lived eight or

ten years longer, but never again, spite of valiant attempts, was he able to do that which he loved best on earth In his retirement he was still a tower of strength, and his little house was the rendezvous of those who needed wholesome advice or warm sympathy Nor did men in higher positions disdain to visit him and seek his counsel Many a mystery was elucidated by his knowledge and judgment When Sing Su failed to fathom a perplexity he would wait till evening, then quietly find his way through the by-ways to Chang's little domain, almost certain to receive there the guidance he needed Once in our own house something went wrong There was a spirit, an atmosphere we neither liked nor understood What could be the matter? Whilst we were puzzling, along came Mr Midnight Dzang—so called because he rarely paid us a visit before 10 P M or left before midnight Chang had sent a message by him

"Get rid of your cook," he said

We took his advice, and speedily the barometer rose

No one entered the narrow gate into the church without his imprimatur, and many disputes that might have grown to troublesome dimensions he settled Yet withal, he was himself beyond reproach, and no breath of scandal or suspicion touched him No man or woman spoke ill of him, to the best of my knowledge His enforced retirement was a terrible loss In the course of the years, other and abler men came on the scene, but his was the devotion and faithfulness that was eager for the laborious post, the forlorn hope, and when we badly needed such zeal When the people at Crag Head attacked our newly formed station, destroyed the furniture, beat the Christians leaving one on the ground for dead, and when none dared go from the city to gather the scattered flock together again, it was Chang who said

"Let me go!"

Though we cannot say Chang has like the centurion 'built us a synagogue," we can say that he helped largely in the founding and building up of forty ten in each of four large districts

Sad to say, Mrs Chang died some years before him, leaving behind three little girls One day he slowly toiled the well worn road to Sing Su s study, and into his listening ears poured the tale of her long and tender nursing and devotion during his drawn-out illness The tears rained down his thin cheeks as he

detailed instances of her devotion. When he followed her to the grave, their three young daughters came under our protection, and formed a nucleus for further expansion towards girls' education.

Dear Golden Heart had one lack, for which he could not be held responsible. He had no funny-bone in his mental composition; no sense of humour. Life was too big and momentous a thing for laughter or jokes or light comments. Can one wonder? I have lingered over Chang and antedated some of the events by years, because Chang, Sing Su, and I began a new life together on the picturesque River's Heart. Moreover, his whole soul was with us; his heart was as our heart. Those six months on the River's Heart together were, so to speak, a vestibule to the lively experiences on which we entered when we moved over to start our twenty-five years' life in the City-of-the-South.

CHAPTER VIII A WOMAN WITHOUT A NAME

AFTER a month in the City of the Peaceful Wave, that is Ningpo, during the late autumn of 1885, I for my part returned home to the City of the South with a totally different outlook on life there The reason was not far to seek With us journeyed our infant daughter on the first of her many future travels up and down the great Flowery Land

How the Chinese admired her white skin! They said "How white! White as snow, white as snow!" But of her little Anglo Saxon nose they said How high is her nose! Higher than any grown woman's in our city'

Yet in the City of the Peaceful Wave I had temporarily an old Chinese nurse with a beautiful Roman nose Where she obtained it is still a mystery ethnologically but there it was

We reached home on Christmas Eve, with no possibility of Christmas fare To add to our joys, the next day I began to shake with ague Outwardly circumstances remained unpropitious but with courage strangely reinforced by the presence of a helpless babe I could face them all Typhoons of aggressive disaffection might rage around us, the chilly blasts of indifference vex us None of these things mattered for were they not outside our charmed circle and incapable of harming the love peace, and joy which dwelt securely within?

The Chinese yield to none in the love of little children They are far gone in frenzy before they will harm a hair of a child's head Rather they will over indulge them, and so great is the intense interest a foreign child has created that it has on occasion saved its parents from violence This happened in the proud, contemptuous anti foreign City of Auspicious Peace near us Some British friends used to find their necessary passage through this city of haughty scholarship anything but peaceful They would breathe a sigh of relief when they succeeded in scurrying through unhurt What a changed attitude when new Baby Olive accompanied them! Stones curses insults, vile names applied alike to consul and missionary, were forgotten in the eager desire to look upon that marvel of their world—a foreigner's infant

During the awful upheaval of 1891 the whole Yangtsze Valley

was ablaze with the burning of foreign buildings, riots were the order of the day, and it was impossible for Western people to walk safely in the streets. An Englishwoman, with whom I had travelled out, was seeking to escape from an incited mob down a quiet lane, when a Chinese woman appeared at her door, infant in arms. Realizing instantly the Englishwoman's peril, she held out her child

"Take it!" she cried

The exquisite gift was thankfully accepted. Clasped together, the two found a safe asylum in the house of another friendly Chinese. Verily, it could be said of China that a Little Child shall lead her

At home in the White House my small amah heard me say "Darling" so often, that when the women asked the child's name she responded "Da ling." And "Da ling Miss" she remained till this day to many of them. I did not correct Amah knowing that none of the folk could twist their tongues round her English name, for there is no letter 'r" in our Southern dialect. Baptized "Dorothy" by the Veteran in our Service in Ningpo, that she was to be registered, Sing Su decreed, as a British subject in his own port of the South, and on arrival he communicated this wish to our consul. Back came the certificate of our country, duly stamped and signed, but inscribed 'Dorothea". We let it stand, as providing the young lady with her choice of names in the future. On meeting the consul, however, Sing Su ventured to suggest that his instructions had been altered

Oh,' replied the consul, "I thought Dorothea Gift of God the better name, nearer the original Greek, you know!'

But it was "Da ling" that became the household word. When a little daughter appeared in golden hearted Chang's household she received the same appellation. Da ling Chang and Da ling Su in later years grew to know each other well. Later, two other small girls, daughters of our Chinese friends, were also so called.

In those days women servants—amahs—were particularly hard to find, and no wonder. Their bound feet unfitted them to cope with us "large-footed,' striding Western women whose ways without exception were peculiar and past finding out

Doubtless fear had also much to do with their reluctance to come under our roof The street cry of "devils and barbarians" might be founded on fact, and they themselves receive some unpleasant confirmation of it in their own persons Methought the little woman who first consented to serve us gave proof one day of this fear, then possessed by the majority After she had been with us some months, I once raised my hand, but in a smiling, playful, and wholly friendly gesture, intending to pat her affectionately on the shoulder In a flash I saw my mistake With terror written on her face, she shrank away—expecting a blow! Ever after, I kept my hands to myself

During the time this woman held office as nurse, Da ling's skin became most irritable and red, and when I kissed her, she had a salty sharp taste Pondering over this peculiarity, a thought struck me I betook me to the puff box in the baby's basket, and was amazed to find the contents also tasted salt and sharp Then the explanation burst on me For days the poor child had been liberally puffed with extra strong American baking-powder. And by myself as well as Amah The powder was beautifully fine, and the operation often performed at dusk I invited Amah to accompany me to the storeroom cupboard

"Show me," I said, "the box you took the baby's powder from last time"

She took down the little round tin of baking powder, in size and shape totally dissimilar from the large square cardboard box which I had been at such pains to point out as the source of her future supply

Perhaps this will be as good a place as any in which to admit that, from one aspect, my first seven years in China were a keen disappointment. Brought up amongst men, as I had been, I had come with possibly almost a masculine idea of doing work, of "making my presence felt," as I had so frequently heard said Greatly hoping to do one kind of work, I was required to do another. What I actually accomplished was little more than the ordinary—or extraordinary—woman's lot of making a home, of staying there, and being the mother of two delightful children Both language and climate proved an endless source of mental and physical irritability, against which one had to fight with every inch of courage and every ounce of cheerfulness at one's

command, or be reduced to the position of a nonentity, which is so displeasing to many women. And, oh, the lapses!

I succeeded in gathering the women round me in the study. Pai-loa's mother and Chang-he's mother were, of course, among them; and on these patient folk I practised what I had learned of their speech—and some that I had not! Doubtless some came out of curiosity, but a fair number never lost interest and were as regular as the sun in the heavens in attendance. On one of these occasions in came a girl of sixteen. In her arms was a boy almost as tall as herself, his long legs hanging helplessly down to her own feet. Not liking the look of him, I called in Sing Su, who asked what was the matter with him.

"He is just starting with the Big Guest (smallpox)," said the girl readily. Measles, in native parlance, is the "Little Guest."

"Then you had better take him home, for we foreigners do not like to take that complaint," was Sing Su's suggestion.

Seated on my lap at the time was little Da-ling, but vaccination had already been performed on her. This had been done by a young amateur, a British member of the Customs, who was said to be efficient in this matter. But when the same operator vaccinated Sing Su from her, as was the method in those days, there was serious trouble. I greatly feared Sing Su would lose his arm, and for a week scarcely a bite passed his lips.

It was as difficult to find a House-Boy as to find an Amah. We had to experiment. One of our failures was a tailor who thought he would like to see if serving the foreigner was easier than sitting cross-legged all day sewing. He it was who, when he cleaned a room, swept the dust into a corner, there to wait till the pile was thought large enough to remove. He returned to his trade, and the Bread-maker's nephew took his place. Now I had yet quite a few household gods, and in such immature hands these fared badly. It was break, break, break, until there threatened to be nothing left to break. I believe I stood the ordeal reasonably well until one evening when a lovely hot-water jug, soft pink and dull gold, was ruthlessly swept off the table and broken into twenty pieces by the callow youth. My mother had instantly bought it for me when I had admired it in the far-off North-country shop, just before leaving for China. I confess I ducked my head and wept aloud. This emotion—not the

breaking of the jug—roused Sing Su to wrathful expostulation with Ah Djang, cook and bread maker, who proceeded to administer condign punishment, coupled with loud vituperation—for our benefit—on the careless wight All of which failed to restore my pretty English jug

We decided to give Pai loa Na's youngest son a chance He, Pai shi, had youth on his side, and he remained with us for years He it was who escorted me to my first wedding feast Anxiety lest my manners should bring disgrace on him led him, shyly, to instruct me how to behave at table, as we walked thither To the best of my recollection my most serious *faux pas* would be to place my chopsticks awry on the table When not engaged in conveying some morsel to my mouth my chopsticks must be laid down close together, with mathematical precision at my right, and plumb with the edge of the table But in those days, and in spite of so simple an example, Chinese etiquette seemed such a complicated and exact science that I soon gave it up in despair Sheltering myself behind my "outside barbarian" ignorance of polite usages I was excused much and received courteous consideration

One of my great perplexities was how to speak of, or to, a Chinese woman There seemed to be a different appellation for her in every walk of life She was to be addressed in the capacity of Wife of Teacher So-and So, or as the Wife of Workman So-and So If she had a son these distinctions shrank into nothingness and she was spoken of by everybody as his Mother Thus my good friend Pai loa Na was styled the Mother, or Na, of Pai loa, he being her eldest son

A woman servant I had in the house later was called by me just "Amah," or 'Nurse" One day being unwell, and seeing much of her, I thought I would shorten the weary hours by asking for a little light on this involved subject

"Amah" I bravely began tell me, what is your name?"

For quite a time she giggled gaily at such an amusing question

'I have none,' at length she replied

Then she added, as if it were something to be proud of "Nor do I know the year nor the day, when I was born I have never asked my mother I only know it was somewhere in the twelfth moon—December—and that I am about thirty"

command, or be reduced to the position of a nonentity, which is so displeasing to many women And, oh, the lapses!

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est, or approach with impunity the nearest. A stick was therefore a necessary concomitant when out walking, for the dogs seemed to look upon us foreigners as their lawful prey. The owners occasionally called out that they would *tae-sz*—"beat to death"—the animals, but I never saw even the slightest approach to the doing of it, except with words.

Western women had to deny themselves the pleasure of making their own purchases in our city. It paid to let the servant buy. Occasionally a lady insisted on going herself; but before she had been in the shop two minutes, a motley crowd would press in after her, without let or hindrance from the shopowner, bent on seeing what she wished to buy, and ready to help her with friendly counsel. The shopkeeper would feebly protest. The lady would remind them that she must breathe to live, and that they were suffocating her. All in vain. For an instant they would fall back, but soon were pushing as before, until the would-be purchaser beat a retreat, vowing never again to repeat the experiment.

It was in December 1884 that I landed in Shanghai: the centre of trade in the Far East. Not for five years did I again see anything like a European town, or have the pleasurable sensation of riding in any kind of wheeled conveyance whatsoever. There was no such thing as a wheeled vehicle, not even a wheelbarrow, in the City-of-the-South. Sing Su also soon gave up his pony. There were no roads fit to ride on, nor was there even a blacksmith who could shoe a horse. The very horses which the mandarins used went without shoes!

Although not particularly nervous in other ways, I was more than a year in the City-of-the-South before I ventured alone through the Big Street. This street, about three yards wide, runs for miles the length of the city in a straight line, from the North to the South Gate, and beyond. On steamer or other busy occasions, it is crowded with foot passengers, who must always give precedence to burden-bearing coolies, and to sedan-chair bearers. The coolies come swinging along with their heavy loads of tallow, kerosene oil, bales of English cotton goods, or, in those days, baskets of copper money. But they are not quite as unceremonious as the chair bearers, who hurry by with their human burdens and do not hesitate to push foot passengers aside with a force that threatens to knock them to the ground.

The shops are mainly doorless and windowless, and at night are closed in with wooden shutters. Many of the good shops are handsome, according to Chinese ideas, the fronts being carved elaborately, and picked out with gold and silver and various bright colours. The lamp shops are the gayest, being well lighted at dusk. Eight o'clock saw the streets in complete darkness, as there was then no gas or electricity. Both beggars and dogs were important denizens of the street, and could not be ignored. We avoided contact with the beggars, who looked their part to perfection. They were most of them wretched opium sots, filthy and unsightly beyond compare, and more alive than they ought to be. Their methods were worth studying. They went into a shop, and importuned at the counter until served, were it five minutes or fifty, and their probable reward was a copper coin of which it took one hundred to make fourpence. Failing the odd cash, they would say:

"Then give me a big cash for a little one."

Beggars demanded rather than begged. They were protected by a guild, and had a "king," so woe betided the shopkeeper who ill-used one of them. He might have his shop pulled about his ears as the penalty for his offence.

At some houses we knew the dogs better than the people. Their bark was loud and fierce, and had a wearisome persistency. I have often had as many as six at my heels, vying with each other as to which could show his teeth the most, bark the loud-

which happened on state occasions The sideboard was long and substantial, and had one merit it was fashioned of hard teakwood into which the white ants could not easily set their teeth, whereas they gobbled up our ordinary local wood while we slept

Sing Su saw my look of consternation at first view of these ancient worthies

"A coat of varnish will make them all right," he airily cried

It certainly worked wonders Nor were these antiques without significance They recalled tales that had become legend in 1884, of the days when the foreigners 'boiled their ham in champagne" There was a tale of a man who invited a number of his compatriots to dine but forgot the fact and stayed late at the club When the guests arrived and found neither host nor dinner, they hied them to the roof of the one storeyed building, and proceeded to strip it of its tiles With these they pelted the owner on his belated appearance Episodes of this kind were usually associated with dining out There was a tale of one host who annoyed by the remarks of his right hand guest, took up the pie he was serving and turned it upside down on to the pate of that individual Both these stories and others reprehensible but true were later to be told us by our genial old French Commissioner of Customs

Our drawing room suite had the doubtful merit of being brand new, and consisted of the inept little chairs customary in those days, and a couch the spring and webbing of which soon gave way in our damp climate I hit on the idea of replacing the webbing with native leather, because this would not rot When a guest however, sat down on the couch, leather and springs combined to emit a squeal amusing to us but causing him or her to move uneasily He wondered if he were a jack in the-box, and she if she were the subject of a practical joke A few small tables, a chiffonier of great age my water colours on the walls and a carpet which perforce lived in a moth tight tin lined box six months of the year, completed the *tout ensemble*

Forgive these details because of my pride in this, our bit of semi England planted in the heart of a Chinese city

'Your home and God s grace are all the joy you can count upon to sustain you said some one of such a house

I SOMETIMES said it paid to go into the country, if only for the joy of returning home. In the hot weather, with what a sigh of relief and gratitude did we exchange the stony, arid, mal-odorous streets for our spacious lawn and our view of the hoary city wall, over which at night-fall crept the cool sea-breezes that preserved us alive. Inside those compound walls, too, stood the White House which young Sing Su had built. Its stark newness was soon mellowed by our mulberry and willow trees, which raced skyward at such high speed as if to see which could first reach the apex of the roof.

Roomy and pleasant, the White House sheltered us, and some others, for decades. Its long French windows were also doors which stood invitingly open in summer. They led on to the wide veranda; with dark-red wooden pillars to support the upstairs veranda instead of the cumbrous brick pillars used by many builders as if with the fell design of excluding light and air from the rooms within. The doors, windows, and room floors, varnished mahogany red, shone, as did the furniture. Every-thing was simple and easy to keep clean.

True, as I have heard say, there is no such thing in South China as seasoned wood. Certes, there was little enough of it in the White House. Consequently, in the bone-dry autumn days we now and again heard small explosions, like the crack of a pistol. It was merely the shrinking and splitting of a door-panel. One evening little Da-ling left her bed, and creeping softly downstairs, stood gazing in at us through one of the aper-tures. Presently the Gift of God called out, in Chinese idiom: "Mamma! The door open wide!"—as if the crack were another door, but not quite big enough to admit her.

And the furniture! It had been bought by Sing Su, mostly at sales in Shanghai, before I had time to reach China and stop him. Some of it had evidently done duty at a hotel, or men's mess, sixty years before. The dining-room had a red repp couch, two easy-chairs of sorts, and six dining chairs of the pattern ortho-dox in South China. The mahogany table was wide enough to seat, comfortably, at each end, two human turtle-doves: and was equally capable of being lengthened to seat over twenty—

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Forgive these details because of my pride in this, our bit of semi-England planted in the heart of a Chinese city

"Your home and God s grace are all the joy you can count upon to sustain you," said some one of such a house

I began now to understand the remarks made about me by the man in the street, some of which were pertinent.

"I cannot imagine where she puts her rice," said one to his companion.

He was referring to the garments and small waist-line of those times.

"She is as white as snow, as white as snow!" women would admiringly descant on my complexion.

They produced the desired pallor by plastering their faces thickly with white powder, sometimes with ghastly effect. But the well-dressed man who said nothing but showed his feelings by ostentatiously, and while at a considerable distance, covering up his mouth and nostrils with his long sleeve, and keeping them thus till he was well past me—he provided the unkindest cut of all. An Englishman once questioned a familiar Chinese friend as to the reason of this and similar studied insults.

"Tell me frankly," he urged; "have we really an odour all our own, one that you cannot abide?"

After much hesitation the Chinese was induced to speak. "You foreigners do indeed smell so much of mutton fat!" he admitted. And this, mind you, after a daily tub, or, rather, two or three during the extreme heat of summer.

After the back of the day's work was broken, we loved best of all a game of "beat the ball," as the Chinese call tennis. If wet ground prevented, it was a habit of most of the little foreign community to take an evening walk for exercise. Imagine our amusement as we stepped out together one evening to hear this comment:

"It is six o'clock. The foreigners are let loose."

One day Sing Su and I were walking outside the Hill-foot Gate. In the distance were two men hoeing in the fields

"Look at those two!" shouted one to the other. "They are husband and wife, walking side by side. It looks all right for them, but wouldn't it look queer if we did it?"

When out one evening we saw coming towards us a fine tall young man in Chinese dress. The setting sun was behind, and lighted up his tell-tale fair face and hair. Indeed, there appeared to be a halo of light around him.

"An angel approaches," quoth Sing Su.

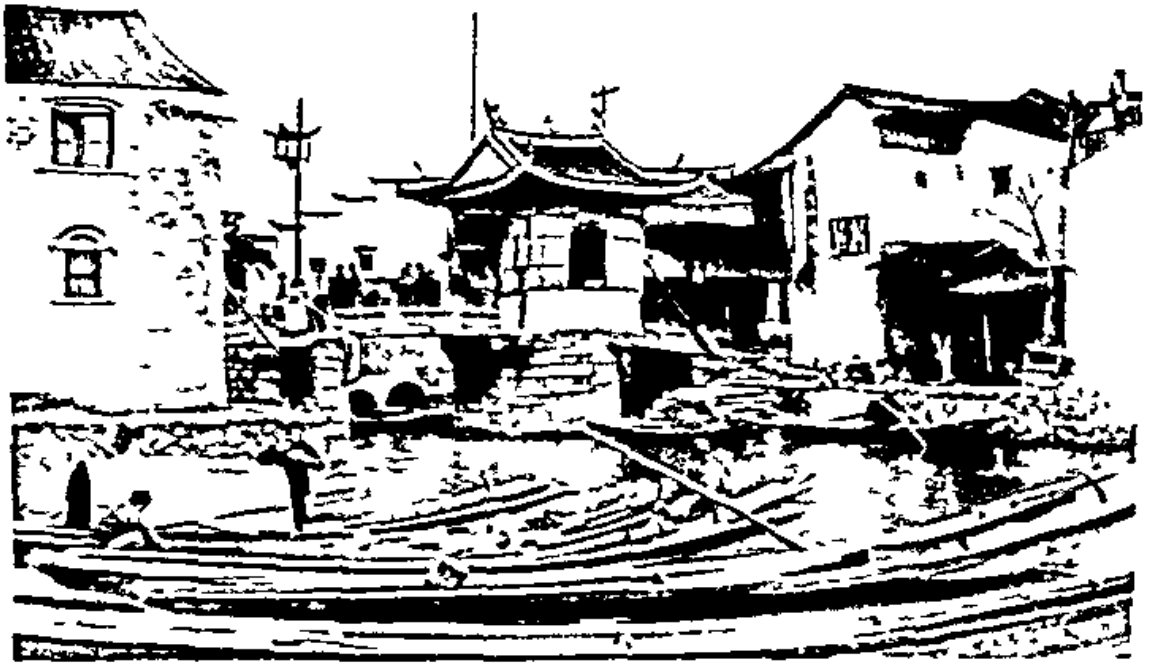


Photo by T. Bulla & Co. Ltd.

Ours was a City of Canals which reminded one of Venice

"Have you said your prayers this morning?" she asked A sure sign of spiritual life if he could answer in the affirmative

I began, too, to understand the naïve comments of our domestics I must not tell tales out of school, but I was invariably down to breakfast an appreciable time before Sing Su Remarking on this one day, the Boy accounted for it to that first little amah of mine

"Sing Su remains longer upstairs to make prayer!" he explained

No doubt of it The amah in her turn confided to the Boy how extravagant she thought me

"Does she not eat, two at a time, mind you, of our preserved eggs for her breakfast, and are they not sixteen cash each?"

I have always liked the curious dark coloured preserved Chinese eggs And consider, I pray, how little there was for me to eat! At one season wee crabs cooked with Chinese soy were my standing breakfast and most appetizing, served warm in a little Chinese bowl

One clear starlit night Sing Su and I were returning home about ten o'clock when we were startled by an unusual blaze, which flamed up not far away To our surprise it provoked none of the uproar which the devouring element calls forth when Chinese houses and property are its prey So we turned aside to see what this strange sight might mean In a large space we found two or three men feeding a big bonfire, around which were ranged various articles of furniture, an elaborate bedstead being the most prominent As we stood there gazing, men arrived continually, bringing other articles such as trunks, a wash stand, wardrobe, cupboard, large and small tables, a sedan chair, a horse, a hat box—in fact, everything a prosperous Chinese would need, even to opium and tobacco pipes, and men and women attendants In addition came thirty or forty red boxes strung on a long pole, and full of gold and silver money One after another, these objects were placed on the fire, the attendants also, and but a few moments sufficed to reduce every one of them to ashes A man stood at a respectful distance, holding the burning trunks in position with his long pole

"What heaps of clothes there are in these boxes!" he ejaculated

China, and in prehistoric England—if we go back far enough—when living attendants, or wives, were sacrificed on the funeral pyre!

It is supposed that the objects burned on these occasions become substantial in the other world. While the more intelligent laugh when the utter childishness of it is pointed out to them, yet training and custom hold all in bondage—until the fetters are snapped.

Despite low wages and poverty, the appearance of the ordinary folk is often clean and neat. Those women we met out walking attracted me. A working-man's garment would perhaps be well-patched; but artistically so. The patches would be fastened on with thick linen thread, and by large regular stitches on the top, in full view, not hidden as are ours. Now and again a man would appear with the sides of his working blouse smocked with a skill I envied.

The naïvety pleased me. We had a Boy who desired to make his friend a wedding-present of a clock.

"A new clock, of course," said I.

"Oh, no," replied he. "If a clock has been used for some time by somebody else, you know it can walk!" It would go. "If it is new, you cannot be certain about it."

Sound reasoning, with the logical corollary that if the clock stopped, it was "dead"—*sz-goa!*

CHAPTER X A WEDDING AT PLUM TORRENT

ONE day when he returned home from the country, Sing Su dropped a bomb at my feet

"You are going to have two Chinese ladies to stay with you" he said, "a mother and her sick daughter"

Forgetting to make any sort of protest, three questions tumbled out of my mouth

"Why are they coming? When? And where shall we put them?" They were succinctly answered

They begged to come because the young lady was shortly to be married, and her fiancé's family—Ah Shah's of Plum Torrent—had insisted on the desirability of her first being cured of her opium smoking By this time Sing Su had earned a reputation for curing the victims of this terrible habit, which is often begun because opium eases if it does not cure, many complaints As to when, the sooner the better They arrived next day!

Where were we to put them? That was the quandary Their ways were not our ways, nor ours theirs In many Southern Chinese homes the sitting room and bedroom are a combined affair The bed is an elaborate piece of household furniture, much as the sideboard or wardrobe is in an English home The ladies, with their bound feet, would find climbing our stairs a hardship especially as the younger was ill After much thought we concluded that both mother and daughter would be happier and feel freer in a near by room in our compound, arranged in Chinese style I was sorry for the girl of eighteen She looked ill, and had to be supported when tottering the short distance to her room a sad object as a prospective bride

Our treatment, I must allow, did not amount to much but it did what was needed Quinine was the chief medicine, with strong coffee—"Kaffe" they called it This served to deaden the suffering following the loss of the regular dose of opium I asked why this young lady began to take opium

"Every day, at cockcrow, she was attacked by bad pains in the body" I was told

The cure by opium, however, had been worse than the complaint I remembered having cured a girl in my own family of similar distress by the application of hot fomentations We did

our best under the circumstances, and had the pleasure of seeing Miss Ting so improved, and free from the habit, that in a few weeks' time she was fit to go home. But not before I had been adopted as her "Second Mother," which was gratifying. The cure of Miss Ting enhanced our joint reputation, and when the marriage approached, nothing would satisfy but that Sing Su should perform the ceremony and I accompany him to attend the wedding festivities. These were to be held at the bridegroom's home; and the happy man was the elder brother of Ah Shah, our friend of the dress-improver incident.

Another point was insisted upon. The portable little harmonium, which I had won as champion lady walker of our foreign community in a contest round the city wall, must accompany us. It was required to discourse sweet music on the auspicious occasion.

Both my attendant companion, Pai-loa's mother, and I had a fine time at the wedding. This was only my second genuine country expedition, and more adventurous than the first. We journeyed in a big row-boat up our river, called the Bowl because of the shape of the country through which for fifteen miles it flows. We landed at Under-the-Bridge, and there added to our little cortège some near relatives of the P'an family, also bound for the wedding. In our light mountain chairs we were cheerfully swung along by the Under-the-Bridge bearers. Their names were to become household words to us, but I added mischievous English descriptive cognomens, of which they were ignorant. This was as well, seeing that one was affectionately called "The Buffalo." Faithful and true were these men: and always engaged when Sing Su had a journey ahead of him, even if in the opposite direction from their homes. Naturally they were paid in excess of what their own countrymen would have given, and they had a much easier time, for the queer foreigner did what a native-born Chinese never did—walked much of the way, and always up the hills! Years after we left the City-of-the-South, when a little luck came to Sing Su, these good men received proof that he held fast to their memory and was still mindful of their arduous and loyal service.

On our way Sing Su had one source of anxiety which he concealed from me as long as possible. About a mile from our desti-

It is well not to argue with the nationalist spirit in the middle of a stream Sing Su in English quietly counselled me to get down and go on

"Lower my chair," said I to my bearers

Being now near the bank, I stepped out on to it, and proceeded nonchalantly ahead leaving Sing Su to parley with the foe and make plain his opinion of their conduct Later he confided to me his greatest regret Probably it was his fears on my account which caused him to speak angrily to them Yet for the life of me I cannot, on occasion help thinking of righteous anger on Sing Su's part rather as a virtue On our return to the City of the-South I told in cocksure fashion how little alarmed I had been by this occurrence

'Yes, you did not know your danger," a friend gently commented

As I passed slowly up the river bank at Kue-yie wondering how those left behind were faring a village urchin marched belligerently beside me He sawed up and down his curved firewood knife 'Cut your head off! Cut your head off!" he kept crying at me At him it was easy to smile But a man, disturbed at his meal came to his door with rice-bowl and chopsticks in hand

"You had better go quickly," he said gravely

I gave heed hastened my footsteps and soon overtook our two anxious waiting womenfolk With never a word they sympathetically took each a hand and thus we walked the short distance to Plum Torrent

It were difficult to imagine a greater change in our reception Here were smiles cordial greetings, and the best possible arrangements for our comfort This but one short mile distant from Kue-yie! It was incredible The Elders were anxious to hear what had happened for the night before a number of people from Kue yie had been up to let them know they intended to kill us if we presumed to pass through their village

'But they wouldn't dare! added Ah Shih

I am not so sure now

Plum Torrent is in a narrow ravine between two high hills and is singularly patriarchal and old world Though I never went again I can still imagine the tiny picturesque village and see its

fellows reproduced in famous Chinese pictures The wide foot path turns and twists up it not a dwelling is on the level every house being on a steep incline and on one side of the ravine only Down this ravine during the rains the torrent must dash madly

Ah Shah s family consisted of three patriarchs two at least of whom had taken scholarly degrees and their descendants The three had each a huge house on the upper slopes of the ravine which showed considerable skill in the architect and solid work on the builder s part From the front doors of all three one above the other the occupants looked down straight on to the enormous tiled roofs of the house next below Could any one invent a better check to curiosity than to be able to see nothing of one s neighbours but a sea of their tiled roofs ?

The wedding arrangements were on a big scale as was consistent with the dignity of the family There were three days of feasting and where all those people came from it were hard to imagine Many were from over the hills and far away

On the wedding eve the bride arrived in state She was borne hither in a gay red much decorated sedan-chair hung with coloured lanterns Just as she reached the house a small wood fire was kindled inside the front gate over which she was carried in her chair—an act of purification I wondered that the bride groom s parents were not waiting to welcome her but was told they had gone out at the back to be under Heaven or the sky at the moment of the bride s arrival to ensure lasting amicable relations with the newcomer into the family I forget whether the bride s scarlet gown was hired for the occasion as is often the case Her head dress was a gilt heavy red and green structure a great weight for my gentle adopted daughter s head to bear

The wedding ceremony in the guest hall in the evening was in the usual Chinese style with the Christian element added The harmonium contributed bravely to the singing of the hymns and as prayer ascended I was carried back in thought through the ages to Abraham Isaac and Jacob

During our stay Sing Su and I had our simple English breakfast in our room and we provided it ourselves At midday Sing Su always feasted with the men On one of the three big days the midday feast was for lady friends and relatives

only, in which I of course shared. Such a cheerful, well-dressed company these ladies were, in their gay silks and satins, that I felt a dundy-grey sparrow beside them in my cloth dress. But they were kind and considerate, and possibly did not expect much. The dish I enjoyed most during the whole time contained some delicious little dumplings stewed in gravy. What they were made of I was never quite sure; but they tasted like oatmeal or wholemeal. On this as on every other occasion the baby organ raised its cheerful note.

The lady of the house must have breathed a great sigh of relief when this distracting period was over. She was a capable woman, who not only superintended, but also herself did much of the cooking. One day I found her looking very hot and weary; and can one wonder, seeing that four hundred meals were served during that time? It was, I felt, particularly kind of her to admit us, strangers from a far-off Western nation, to her home on so important an occasion. She came to our room as often as her duties allowed, full of curiosity about me, my clothes, and our customs. I gave her *carte blanche* to examine me to her heart's content, thereby, I flatter myself, dispelling some illusions. I also told her of our ways. With a pleased smile she turned to her companion.

"Just like us, aren't they?" she graciously exclaimed.

I wish I could describe adequately the quaint function that took place one day at Sing Su's request. A coloured carpet was spread on the floor of the guest-room, and here, attired in ceremonial long robes and black satin hats topped with the scholar's coloured "button," the male heads of the family assembled to perform the ancient rite of "worshipping," or showing deference to each other. They took it in turn, these aged men, to stand on the carpet two at a time and opposite each other. When in proper position, each gravely bowed to the other, and then knelt and made obeisance the one to the other. This was repeated several times in great style by each pair, with no little grace and in order of age. It was the first, and last, time either of us ever had the privilege of witnessing this remarkable exhibition of the due courtesies to be paid by the several members of a family, each to the other. We were impressed and touched not a little.

On another state occasion the bride, wearing her wedding gar-

ment performed the ceremony of herself for once bringing round to us on a pretty tray cups of fine Chinese tea Its flavour would have been spoilt by the addition of milk and sugar I suppose there was a meaning behind her action Was it to in dicate that she was now among them as one that serveth ?

Equally interesting also was it when on the day following the wedding ceremony the bride and bridegroom in wedding garb were escorted in state into the guest room There they paid their respects to the senior members of the family Each pair of seniors husband and wife in full dress came in ordered suc cession and stood while the bride and groom both knelt and kow towed before them In due course our turn came and we received the obeisance a pleasing ceremony when one ranks among the Elders !

Our last evening came Sing Su was out in the guest room having the usual feast of good things with yet more men visitors I remained in our room the door of which I had carefully barred against stray intruders Presently a little crowd collected on the veranda outside my windows From their talk I gathered they were a contingent from Kue yie ! The windows were made largely of paper and soon fingers began to poke peep-holes in the new clean white spaces Possessed by a spirit of mischief I began to cover up each hole as fast as it went pop Hand kerchiefs towels clothes anything I could lay hands on I seized to obscure their vision But soon my supply was exhausted I enjoyed the by play vastly behind my barred door knowing they could not reach me And so I think did they A slight sound from the dim end of my lamp-lit room caused me to start and turn There advancing towards me was a young man !

My heart sank Here surely was the Kue-yie enemy at close quarters But only for a moment The youth s friendly manner and words soon dispelled my fears. He showed me the tiny door through which he a member of the family had come and which I had failed to fasten He asked what I was doing and then realized the situation and saw my inadequate efforts in trying to cover up the numberless holes

There is a better way than that ! he exclaimed

He proceeded to show me the concealed wooden shutters which were let down into the wall beneath the window In a

trice we were both hard at work putting these up into place and effectively shutting out prying eyes. There was merriment outside and in.

"We came up to see the foreign woman, and she refuses to be put on exhibition!" those outside said.

The foreign woman's thought was, "If you had treated her better to start with, then——"

Sometimes Sing Su would sit for warmth by the kitchen stove, quietly chatting with the Elders about China and England. It was amazing how those veterans, old enough to be his father, accepted what he had come so far to share with them.

Shortly after our visit, one of the three brothers, Mie-ang-sie, now a Christian, prepared his handsome grave, horseshoe in shape, on a hillside, near the public highway. On the whitened brickwork stood boldly the black characters, "Still there is hope." Tersely it told the story to the passer-by of that faith in an eternal happiness which was his.

We grieved to leave those scholarly, kindly, simple country gentlefolk. Moreover, we had again to run the gauntlet of the belligerents in Kue-yie. We were up before daylight, our *pu-kai*, or bedding, rolled up, and our breakfast eaten before the stars paled. We reached Kue-yie as the sun rose over the hill-tops, and the smoke from their rice-pans was beginning to ascend.

"Also," as Sing Su remarked, "before the evil spirit has had time to assert itself."

But as the years fled, a change of heart came over the dreaded Kue-yie. There remains now no hatred or threatened violence to the erstwhile detested foreigner. He is even welcomed. He stays, and he sleeps there.

How did it come about? The south wind blew: the ice melted

(1)

THROUGH all the welter of close on two decades that have elapsed since the Chinese Revolution of 1911, is it possible, think you, to claim that more than one real virile ruler rose over the darkened horizon of China? Even Yuan Shih kai, who many Westerners believed and hoped would strive with single heart for the salvation and unification of his country, after four short years of power split on the well charted rock of Self Among the uncountable horde of temporary rulers since Yuan, of all sorts and sizes we have, in the words of Mencius, ' craned our necks " searching in vain for the appearing of an effective saviour of the people It has seemed sometimes as if soon there would remain little other to save than a land cruelly desolated by civil war, a people steeped in dire poverty

The lack of compelling personality in China's public men to-day, and disinterestedness such as was shown by Garibaldi Cromwell, Abraham Lincoln and a host of others, perplexes us all the more when we recall certain indomitable Chinese met in the more private walks of life There are these Chinese men ready and willing not only to give their all, but to live as well as die for a cause they count noble

Among our Chinese village Hampdens and Pyms three concrete examples leap to my mind Ka kung, Ding-er, and Pang di were a trio of doughty champions of religious liberty Whatever else these three men lacked, it was not force of character They shone with it, severally and collectively Each belonged to a different village, and each refused to be intimidated or deflected, either by their fellows or by their bitter opponents, the local mandarins These latter had in their hands not only the sentence of life or death but also the power to keep men suffering the horrors of the old time Chinese prison for an indefinite period, even for the rest of their days To my certain knowledge, many besides these three Israelitish Children risked everything, walked through the fires of persecution, and sometimes lost their lives in a cause they prized dearer than exist-

ence. But of these three I propose to write; for I am puzzled how it comes about, with such men, that there is now this dearth of heroes in the ruling ranks of Chinese life.

Ka-kung, Ding-er, and Pang-di all lived away up in Cedar Creek. A beautiful freshwater stream wound its way through circuitous valleys surrounded by glorious mountains which rival, if they do not surpass, those in the Scottish Highlands. Here, Nature is wondrous peaceful, but, sad to say, human nature is precisely the opposite. The folks who live in this lovely region are wilder, more arrogant, vindictive, self-sufficient, and more a law unto themselves, than any remote Highlander would aspire to be. The feuds frequent among themselves are bitter. That between Maple Grove and Crag Head lasted for years. The villagers would have no dealings with each other; nor would they condescend to intermarry. One night, because of some real or supposed injury, Fung-ling, or Maple Grove, rose in its fury and burnt the Crag Head people out of house and home. Up there men worked in their fields with their guns beside them; and entirely for protection against the human and not the wild beast. Twenty or more years after the time of which I now write, the magistrate of the City-of-the-South told Sing Su that already he had been sixty times up there to hold inquests on violent deaths, and the year had yet some months to run.

Sing Su admitted to me more than once that he went up the Creek with unhappy forebodings, knowing that he laid himself open to be shot at, perhaps from behind an ancestral grave.

"How dare this impudent *fa-nang*—foreigner—walk our streets?" cried the villagers.

It was not to be wondered at that he turned a deaf ear to my urgent requests to accompany him to this delightful region.

"They are far too ready with their guns for my comfort," he dogmatized; "and certainly it is not safe for you."

But though in all those five-and-twenty years I never reached Maple Grove or Crag Head, and envied the first white woman, "Mrs. Sea," who afterwards attained to them, the South Creek people who were interested in us could and did come to the city. There I welcomed them with an affection amounting to awe because of their fine achievements.

The introduction of a new ideal, a foreign one at that, into the South Creek district can only be likened to the bursting of a shell, with the accompanying flying fragments The explosive force of the new idea was first carried to Crag Head by a native of that place who had it at Clear Streams, where he happened to be working as a tailor Clear Streams is only ten miles from Crag Head, but the hills which interpose their bulk between are a formidable barrier They rise some two thousand feet, and the steep pass connecting the villages rises fifteen hundred feet

For some time this man, whose name I do not know, accompanied by two or three others, made the arduous journey between Clear Streams and Crag Head every Sunday Then, lo, the young foreigner himself, the importer of these strange doctrines appeared over the towering hill top and on the scene When visiting a place of any importance, it was Sing Su's plan to call first on the headman, exchange courteous greetings, and ask his gracious permission to speak not only then, but on any subsequent visits, in the Ancestral Hall This hall is clan, that is, public property If permission were granted, the next step was for him and those with him to go to the hall and there put his case before his curious, critical, and possibly adverse audience He used every ounce of skill at his command, and language that was as good, as time went on, as their own Indeed, they often said it was better than their own, because more cultivated

Thus Sing Su behaved at Crag Head with its five thousand inhabitants (The village is named after its Crag which rises sheer five hundred feet) He felt all the time very much as if he had projected himself into a den of lions so adverse was the spirit

Ka kung lived at Crag Head but Ding er belonged to Maple Grove, six miles away, with its six thousand people Both were small farmers, and both had trained as pugilists no school of humility or long suffering that! Ka kung arrived home one evening from working in his fields

"A foreigner has come to Crag Head to teach us something," his wife informed him

"Has he? We'll see!" he scornfully replied

After a hasty meal he set out, fully determined to stop the barbarian's talk by making a disturbance

On reaching the Ancestral Hall he found it packed with people

"It was with the greatest difficulty," he used to say when telling the story later, "that I wriggled my foot over the high threshold board, and inside the door"

Ka-kung listened, biding his time for the moment of attack The foreigner was telling a story about a spendthrift wandering son and a wonderfully kind, forgiving Father

"I became so absorbed in the tale that I forgot the purpose for which I had come The time for attack never arrived At the end of the tale, to my astonishment, I found I had elbowed my way from the entrance, through the mass of the people, to the far end where stood Sing Su And when he sat down, I longed for him to stand up once more, start afresh and tell the story all over again!"

So indeed might we, could we but hear that story in its Eastern dress, which transforms it into a living drama Before that day on which he heard it, Ka kung describes himself as "a violent and sinful man"

"When I left the hall," he continues 'I did not know what had come to me But one thing I knew I was a different being The fighting cursing, and gambling that came so easy to me before were now impossible'

Something certainly happened It was evident from his face and more than could be accounted for by the speaker's words Perhaps one of our great biologists or psychologists can explain how the mysterious Power in an hour completely changed Ka kung's outlook on life and his attitude towards his fellow men Ka kung called it the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ In this belief he remained to the day of his lamented death

But as I have intimated Ka kung had a wife She also was a power, She hated her husband's new faith like poison and opposed it with all the ingenuity and arts at her command For nine long years she led Ka kung a dog's life in her efforts to wean him from this foreign belief being encouraged thereto by her friends and neighbours. One of her simplest devices



Prison usage in former days, when Chinese heroes fought their battles for religious freedom

a semi-conscious condition, she tenderly ministered to him, though the crowd outside was still threatening.

"Drag him out, hang him to a tree, and then shoot him like a crow!" they shouted.

They said they would make an end of him that night, and meant it.

"Save yourself and leave me to my fate," Ka-kung, somewhat recovering consciousness, entreated her again and again. "If I am killed, Mr. Su will not let you starve," he added pathetically. But no persuasions moved her.

"They shall kill me before I'll let them kill thee," she replied. Then she sent down a peremptory message also to Sing Su!

"Double up your fists," it ran, "and have the miscreants who have so nearly killed my man brought to justice."

As a matter of fact, the three compatriots, Ka-kung, Pang-di, and Ding-er were all involved in the disturbance at Vu-yoa where Ka-kung was seriously hurt: nor was he the only one who suffered badly, and not for the first time. None of the three men belonged to Vu-yoa. It was the home village of a nephew of Ding-er's, and he was a young man who had made it known that he had imbibed his uncle's teaching and intended to follow in his steps. The great Dragon Festival provided the people with the desired opportunity of showing the young man their opinion of his detested foreign proclivities. "As one of us," they said in effect, "you shall not worship that outside barbarian god, Yi-su, and you shall worship on the other hand our own great dragon god, both for yourself and also as our representative"—the latter a ceremony he had never before been called upon to perform.

So great was the show of antagonism that, fearing heavy trouble, the nephew appealed for help to his uncle Ding-er. The result was that both Ka-kung and Pang-di, men of respectable positions, went with Ding-er to Vu-yoa, in the hope of reasoning with, and possibly winning over, the antagonists. Alas, their very arrival was the signal. Before they could speak a word, they were fiercely attacked by a band of roughs awaiting the occasion. As Ka-kung and Ding-er had both learned the gentle art of pugilism, no doubt retaliation in kind

would have best pleased the old Adam within but milder counsels prevailed Also they were far outnumbered! The only politic course was, if possible, to escape After cruel treatment, Ka kung found a refuge in a loft, where his wife, as has been told, found him half dead Ding er, for once, escaped He ran out by a back door, after parrying any number of blows with his old skill But the youngest of the three, Pang di, failed to evade the enemy He was seized and sorely hurt with stoning When they had reduced him to a fainting condition, they took him and with a long swing flung him out into the centre of a pool quite deep enough to drown him

The sudden chill somewhat restored his senses He succeeded in struggling and crawling out on the other side When they saw him still capable of doing this, they ran round and attacked him again with renewed zest, though he was sore all over, hatless, shoeless, drenched to the skin Ultimately a good old man happened along and rescued him from their clutches, insisting also on helping him homewards As soon as he could stand the journey, Pang di, with the aid of his old mother, came down to the City of the-South, and was placed under medical care

Pang di is a tall well built Chinese His distinguishing characteristics are his gentle mien, his engaging smile, and, for an Oriental, his fair skin He also has an enlarged foot, the result of elephantiasis, which however, does not hinder good going when he is walking When I saw him, the marks of the dreadful treatment he had received were covered up, but his face told all too plainly of the ordeal through which he had passed It was that of one recovering from a long illness We were in church and he was unable to stand Probably his being surrounded by a company of sympathizers enabled him to remain through the service It is never easy for the foreigner to know the right word on such an occasion as this, but probably my first impulse did as well as any other "Ah! It was such as you the Master meant when He said 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake'"

A smile lit up his eyes He nodded repeatedly, in instant joyful appreciation

"Indeed it is, indeed it is," his near-by friends chimed in vigorously

The moment Sing Su arrived from the country, he went to see Pang di He found the room full of folk, amongst whom were Ka kung, newly arrived, also Ding er, who was the only one of the three with a whole skin At Sing Su's entry all rose, but at sight of their friend poor Pang di, overcome with emotion, sat down and covered his face with his hands in the vain endeavour to hide the drops which came rolling down his cheeks It had been no light thing for these strong men to bear such humiliating treatment patiently Before many more minutes had gone there was not a dry eye in the room But such scenes are too sacred to be reproduced in print

Words of good courage heartened the company and at the end, Pang di declared his intentions to remain firm

'If my pains bring life and liberty to Vu yoa, I can rejoice in them," he said

(11)

But that was not the end As the result of representations made to the city magistrate, he sent up some time later two "runners," or policemen, to Vu yoa to make peace That they were ridiculously inadequate in such a state of affairs was a foregone conclusion Yet what could Sing Su do more? On their arrival, no one would even direct the runners to the homes of the offenders against law and order These had ensconced themselves in the house of the young man upon whom the trouble first fell, he having fled The runners sent for Ka kung to guide them to the instigators of the wrongdoing but the very sight of Ka kung was the signal for another more serious attack In the presence of the minions of the law, a band of men headed by Ka kung's own nephew set upon him like fiends with chunks of wood

It so happened that Pang di s mother, after seeing her son in good hands in the City-of the-South, had returned to her home at Chu moe But feeling unhappy about the mother of the Vu yoa young man, she had set off there, hoping to en-

courage her in this new faith Pang di's mother was a feeble, weak eyed old woman Yet it would have fared worse with Ka kung that day had she not stepped into the breach and stood bravely in front of him!

"I dare you to attack me—an old woman!" she denounced them She did her utmost to ward off the blows Yet despite her efforts, they dragged him by his queue from one room to another of the house, almost tearing off his scalp with his pig tail On reaching the front room, they bore him to the ground and there beat him till he was bruised black and blue from his nape to his heels as Sing Su later saw for himself It is likely the life would have been completely beaten out of Ka kung had not yet another humanitarian a comparative stranger, a passing•fortune-teller, thrown himself down beside him and protected his head from the savage blows This man had heard Ka kung tell of the Doctrine in another village.

After the attackers had expended their strength, and not till then did the runners make a great pretence of giving aid likewise to Ka-kung This is the occasion already referred to when Ka kung's wife hurried to his succour When the ruffians desisted, helped by the women of the place she did her best for him On hearing what had happened, Ka kung's own relatives and clansmen at Crag Head now thought it was high time they took a hand In a body they marched on Vu yoa and demanded that their kinsman be restored to them This was strenuously opposed

"All right!" they answered "It is as you please. But if you do not give Ka kung our clansman up to us now we will go back, beat the drum, call the clan together to the Ancestral Temple, and come again in our full strength, and make you!"

Here indeed were the elements of a clan fight big enough to set the whole district ablaze Probably Ka kung's relatives and friends liked his religious principles as little as did the men of Vu yoa But they also knew the present character and conduct of their man and had no intention of allowing him to continue suffering as an evil doer After long parleying, it ended in some of the wiser Vu yoa elders advising the obdurate members. 'You've given him plenty to go on with! Let him go now,' said they Though this went sadly against the

grain with the majority, Ka-kung was permitted to be carried home in a sedan-chair, more dead than alive.

The next significant action of the Vu-yoa folk was to make a feast, to which they invited gentry from other villages. They then pledged themselves not to allow the "foreign doctrine" in any of their villages. In addition, if any of their clan were beaten, or killed, for being a Christian, no retaliation or demand for compensation was to be made.

It was a sad day for us when Ka-kung joined Pang-di and Ding-er and the other refugees in the city. They looked for help to the almost helpless young Westerners. For by this time young Sing Su had been joined by an even younger man, Sing He—"Mr. Sea." They themselves were counted as the small dust of the balance, and less than nothing, by the citizens of that Southern Chinese city. Daily in the streets they were stigmatized as foreign thieves, foreign devils, and outside barbarians. The very dogs were encouraged to snap at their heels with angry bared teeth. What power had they to help any one? The arm of flesh—as represented by Chinese officials—was dead against them.

Truly Sing Su and Sing He had thrust a sharp sickle into this mighty field: one, too, which could never be withdrawn. And the harvest has included many of China's noblest sons.

(iii)

But what of the third hero in this fight for liberty? In stature Ding-er was shorter than his two friends, Ka-kung and Pang-di; but strength emanated from his thick-set burly frame. And to what shall I compare his voice? The corn-crake, or a bunch of "scissors-grinders," as we call the cicadas in the East. That rasping sound almost defies comparison, and was calculated to make a babe pucker up its face and howl in terror.

Ding-er was of the true bulldog breed. Once he had set his teeth into a thing, grim death could not loosen his hold. In defence of his new principles he feared not God—he loved Him—nor regarded man, who could only injure his body. I used

to tell Sing Su that Ding-er would never die in his bed Yet in this year of grace 1931 he is still a grand old man, holding on to life, and still persistently holding forth the Word of Life I am less concerned, however, as to how Ding er reacted to the Good News as it raced through the countryside than with what happened after The former I forget, but the latter made too deep an impression ever to be obliterated

Ding er was soon in hot water He began to have meetings at Maple Grove Every seventh day he had the tementy, in that neighbourhood, to expatiate on that grace which was shortly to be required of him ! Naturally these gatherings gave dire offence to the anti foreigners The consequence was that Ding-er s premises were bombarded, and he and three other men of his village were rudely seized and brought down in a boat the thirty five miles to the magistrate's yamen in the City of the South On what pretext I do not know , but they were clapped into prison and strung up in such fashion that, for a whole night, their feet could not touch the ground

Having landed their prey in durance, the officials allowed our opposers to return triumphant to Maple Grove Representations to the magistrate were made by Sing Su , and in consequence the prisoners were eased of their torture and next day allowed to put their feet to the ground By the same means they were also brought to an early trial, rather than kept indefinitely for months in prison In an old record of Sing Su's I find his version of their trial reminiscent of *Pilgrim's Progress*

" First, they were falsely charged with all manner of offences and for five hours these four Christian men were bullied and threatened violently During the whole of those five hours they were kept kneeling on the hard stone floor and the runners, gauging the attitude of the officials, denied them the relief allowed even the worst criminals—that of resting their hands on the floor When the official could find nothing to lay hold of in order to torture them, or put them back in prison, he called for documents to be written out saying the prisoners acknowledged having made false accusations against the gentry of Maple Grove, that they had received back all their goods stolen from them and that they promised to hold no more Christian

services at Maple Grove Not an atom of truth in any one of the items They were then ordered to sign this document, and on firmly refusing to do so, the judge became exceedingly angry, threatening them repeatedly that they should be beaten "

Finally, the magistrate asked "Does your religion allow you to smoke opium ? "

"No, it forbids any dealings with it "

"May you gamble ? " he continued

"Decidedly not," they said

"And drink ? " he asked

"In moderation," was the reply

"Does it bid you pay your debts ? "

"Certainly," they agreed

"*Then," he declared, "you owe the Imperial Land Tax* Take them back to prison "

And the poor fellows, who had lost nearly everything they possessed in the world, were taken back to captivity again The gaolers tied them up, each with a chain round his neck passed beneath a pair of handcuffs and drawn together up to a beam overhead Thus they were kept standing for eight weary hours At midnight a bribe to the gaolers loosened the chains a few inches, and they were able to stand at least on their feet But they remained thus till noon next day

Needless to say, during all this long time frequent appeals for more humane treatment were being made to the magistrate With regard to the Land Tax, one man we discovered owed nothing A second actually had a balance to the good *The* third owed a very small sum The fourth who had been seized with them could only reckon up his debt to a couple of dollars Payment for the sum owed, and bail for the prisoners, was offered by Sing Su and his friend Sing He but in vain

Happily we had in the City of the South at this time a consul who, though younger in years even than ourselves set himself valiantly to work He drew the Taotai s attention to the fact that there were certain Treaties with Western Governments which might be right or might be wrong but which his—the Taotai s—Government had made, and presumably with the intention of observing them One of these Treaties ran that Christianity might be freely taught by the foreigner and as

freely accepted by the people The consul happened to be up the Bowl River on the Sunday when the four prisoners arrived in the city Immediately Sing Su sent a messenger express after him, who found him ten miles up-stream As the tide was against him, our young advocate at once set off and walked in to his consulate Arrived at River's Heart, he put on his official dress, called in on us to let us know of his coming, and hurried thence to beard the lion in his den, that is, to interview the Taotai, our highest official How anxiously we awaited his promised return! I still recall the look on his face as we almost ran to meet him at our door As he came slowly up our front steps his blue eyes were clouded as he announced sad news "I can do nothing with the Taotai He lies he knows he lies and he knows I know that he lies," he said

His distress almost equalled our own, and the only comfort we had to offer him was some badly needed dinner

But the case was not done with, and in one respect the consul's protests were effective Ding er's three companions were released in a few days Ding er was held for nearly three weeks more, when he too was set free but in what Sing Su characterized as a "most scurvy manner' He was brought before the Taotai's relative, a Wei yuan, and by him bullied and threatened The bamboos for beating him were significantly produced A thousand blows were ordered

"Ten thousand if you will said Ding er to them, "but I can never sign the document you demand"

This was again to the effect that all his statements were false anent his house being attacked his household goods destroyed or stolen and himself ill treated

Although the threat to beat Ding er did not take effect at the order of the Wei yuan—pronounced Way you an—the runners seized him They held him kneeling on the ground, whilst others of them stretched out his left arm to the full extent Other runners similarly stretched out his right arm Then a runner seized his clenched hand prised open a finger, rubbed it with ink and pressed the false document against it In this way was he made to sign away his character! Protesting vigorously that he had not signed the paper, he was set at liberty

He went home. Once more the faithful met at his house, the rank and file of the place making no demur. Two Sundays passed quietly, and peace seemed assured. Then lo! to everybody's surprise, runners again appeared on the scene. They seized Ding-er, carried him off, and once more clapped him into prison in the City-of-the-South. He was presently examined by various official representatives of the Taotai, confronted with the document which he was said to have signed, and asked why he had recommenced Christian services.

"I let my house to Sing Su," was the crux of his final reply, "and those whom he represents; and the services are theirs" Which was all true. When he refused to withdraw his permission for the services to be held in his house, he was thrown back into prison. This time it was the inner and worst prison; and he lay with banditti, thieves charged with murder, and all kinds of bad characters.

Again our gallant young consul set to work; but finding that nothing whatever except the renunciation of Christian services at Maple Grove would content the Taotai, he finally appealed to Caesar. He sent so many missives relating to this flagrant breach of Rights regarding religious liberty to our Minister, the final British Court of Appeal in Peking, that I suspect he was entreated to be more merciful in his outpourings. Moreover, Peking was a long way off. The law is deliberate in every country, and for eight dreary weeks our clean countryman, Ding-er, lay amid the physical, mental, and moral degradations of a Chinese prison. Happily a certain laxity prevails in those places. It was possible, after making friends with the gaolers, for us to ameliorate Ding-er's wretchedness by sending food and changes of clothing. Ding-er's private compensation, however, was the unique opportunity afforded of telling his fellow-prisoners many things they might never have heard of otherwise. To us outside the waiting seemed interminable. The question would force itself on us: "Have we done all we can to set Ding-er free? Or are we contentedly letting him suffer, vicariously?" It was here our hero showed himself at his best. To the suggestion that he should be set free from prison at any cost, he begged that no short or doubtful cut to justice be tried.

"I am willing to remain in prison indefinitely," he sent us word, "nay, to die in prison, if religious freedom be bought thereby Of that have no shadow of doubt in your mind"

His spirit was that of an earlier Great Man, who wrote "Having wrongfully imprisoned me, let them come themselves and fetch me out!" Ding er could have bought his liberty any day by undertaking to hold no more Christian services in his house

In the end he won through, gloriously In answer to the appeals made in Peking by our representative there to the heads of the Chinese Government, a special Commissioner came down to the City of the-South from our provincial capital He tried Ding er In open court Ding er told his story, and before a juster judge than before At the close the Commissioner spoke

"I believe what you have told me I think you are a good man"

In addition he ordered compensation to be given for the destroyed goods The only reward our indefatigable consul received probably was to murmur to himself, *à propos* of the Taotai, "Let there be justice, though the heavens fall" But we did not hear him

At the Chinese New Year it is the custom for officials to send presents to each other Our Taotai conceived the happy idea of sending this year a live present to our consul, in the person of the man who had been the cause of such long friction between them—Ding-er This he did on New Year's Eve, to await next day Our consul in turn decided to keep Ding er, and send him over to Sing Su as an appropriate greeting from himself on New Year's morning But he counted without Ding er on whom the waiting hours over on River's Heart dragged heavily Impatient of further delay and unaware of the consul's kind idea, Ding er took advantage of his restored and delightful liberty Early on New Year's morning he escaped over to the White House Seven o'clock saw him unannounced finding his way up to Sing Su's bedroom "I couldn't wait a moment longer' he cried rousing Sing Su from his slumbers

In a trice the strange-looking pair, the Englishman in his pyjamas and with tousled hair and Ding er looking more like

a bear than a man, so long had he been unshaven and unshorn, were kneeling together at the bedside. They thanked God with grateful hearts and tears for a mighty deliverance.

Like Ka-kung, Ding-er also had a wife who played no ignoble part during her husband's troubles. Whilst he was in prison, she continued to live in their broken-down home. A rice-pan she borrowed from one friend, her chopsticks from another; her bed was of straw. The money compensation which, in the end, came to them was sufficient to build her a new house. But instead of using it for that, she and Ding-er gave the major portion as an offering to help in the erection of a church at Maple Grove! It is a beautiful building, one in which you, my reader, would be proud to say Our Father, and thank God for the inspiration received from three such Captains Courageous.

As for our chivalrous young consul, even as I write I learn that he is henceforth to be known as "Sir Harry"! Some may conclude that the King knighted him for solid work as Commercial Counsellor in China. Ka-kung, Pang-di, and Ding-er would gladly have bestowed the honour forty years ago.

CHAPTER XII OFFICIALS, FRIENDLY AND OTHERWISE

IN our salad days in the City-of-the-South the greatest obstacle we had to contend against was the Mandarins From the highest, called the Taotai, down to the smallest of the innumerable throng of officials, they were dead against us Nor can we withhold a measure of sympathy if we succeed in putting ourselves in the place of either mandarin or people

Suppose, from a far-off country of which we had never so much as heard, there arrived in England a few people of the weirdest possible appearance Suppose these people, after contriving to rent a dwelling by paying double what any of us would do, calmly settled down to live amongst us We, being perfectly satisfied with ourselves, could only look upon these strangers as interlopers, and the queerest of the queer For, instead of clothes made to clothe and hide their shapes, their apologies for garments were skin tight, as was the fashion of last century, revealing rather than concealing their limbs and figures in disgraceful fashion Those of their women were particularly offensive in this respect Suppose, instead of black hair and dark brown eyes, such as we always have had, these creatures have yellow hair and horrid blue eyes, or others even have flaming red hair Indeed, out of this idiosyncrasy arose the Chinese custom, in some places where they congregated in numbers, of calling their foreign utensils after this ridiculous-coloured hair Thus they would speak of a "red-haired spoon," or a "red haired knife and fork"!

"Strangest of all, these nobodies seemed to think they could teach us something Us! True, they managed to entice a few low-down ignorant coolies, by telling them stories of a countryman of theirs called Yi su, who lived two thousand years ago, and whom they themselves must have despised, since they killed him by the zaih-z ko process, the cross Why! Had we not our own great Teacher, Confucius, who lived long before this Yi su? There could not be any one as great as Confucius, so away with their outlandish teacher! Our mandarins, our mayor our magistrates, all hate these intruders, and object to our having dealings with them Indeed, we know

Kwo was his surname, and Da lao yi—literally Great Old Grandfather—the appellation betokening his official rank, just as we speak of a "Right Honourable Gentleman" When Mr Kwo had a case of persecution put into his hands, Sing Su breathed a sigh of relief, for he knew the scales of justice would not be heavily weighted against the Christians Mr Kwo was a fine example of the old style Chinese scholar, now nearly defunct

"How he stoops!" I once remarked, covertly watching him out of a window, for women should not be too much in evidence on these occasions

"That attitude of humility is highly proper in a disciple of Confucius, and has been cultivated by him," I was answered He wore big round, heavy rimmed spectacles also considered scholarly, and his manners were extremely courteous Two young Englishwomen who came to our neighbourhood had been much impressed in London by the courtly manners of the retired member of the British Consular Service who had given them lessons in the Chinese language When they became acquainted with the Chinese in their own land, they realized so they said, whence Sir Walter Hillier had learnt some of his great courtliness It was partly from intercourse with such as the Venerable Mr Kwo

He became our frequent visitor, and one day said to Sing Su 'Will you teach me English?"

'Certainly, and perhaps you, also will teach me Mandarin' was the naive reply

Lessons were begun and it fell to my lot to preside over the tea table on those bi weekly occasions This was the first time doubtless that Mr Kwo had come into such close proximity with a foreign woman The table was big and I sat at the far end and tried to be as little objectionable as possible I never looked straight at him and I handed his tea cup obliquely—by way of Sing Su *Thus we both survived*

There sat the Chinese gentleman of sixty odd clothed in his dark, loose silk robes and wearing the close fitting black satin hat the only thing that was tight fitting It was topped with the coloured 'button' betokening his rank, and beneath it at the back hung down his long black queue, its end finished off



Photo by G. I. Kitson, H.B.M. Consular Service

A Scholar of the Old School who still likes his old fashioned water pipe, and prefers the Classics to the New Learning

the mandarins would like us to stir up strife and compel these barbarians to go back to their own land."

Is it to be wondered at that with this attitude towards the Westerners *en bloc*, we were derided in the streets, called "Outside Barbarians, foreign dogs and thieves"? In face of it, how then came Christianity to make any headway whatsoever in the City-of-the-South? At first it made little; but with patience, much self-restraint, and more patient sowing of the good seed, coupled with our faith in its self-propagating power, it did begin to make itself felt. First, of course, in the heart of a poor man here, or a poor woman there; among those who had so little of this world's gear that they risked nothing in believing it!

For years in our city the two ribands of life, the Eastern and the Western, theirs and ours, ran on as it were in parallel lines Side by side they ran, yet as sharply defined and clear-cut as if scissors had severed them. Then surely, yet slowly, we began to arrive at more frequent, more enduring, and happier points of contact. On the one hand, we walked their streets, visited their temples, sought out their beauty spots. They, on the other, ventured to inspect us, our house and our compound, came to our church, often stalking about and refusing a seat But they came to see us outlandish people, or hear some new thing.

Our foreign White House, in the street of the Tile Market Temple, had round it the usual high Chinese wall, ornamented at the top by a border made in tiles of the pretty open-work pattern we see in Chinese embroidery. In those walls were three doors One of these, at the back, and more secluded than the other two, was always open, and through it slipped many a truth-seeker—as well as many a self-seeker.

Ah! If the walls of that White House could speak! What tales they would tell, as the years continued, of high courage, patience, endurance under bitter persecution, of grievous loss! Awful tales, some of them: of murder done, then laid at the door of innocent Christians, who at that time were the popular scapegoats; of men, too, who themselves were murdered because they had dared to become Christians; of wounds and bruises, of loss of household goods. Though now more than

forty years ago, it seems but yesterday since the day I lay seriously ill and greatly needing quiet, but with restless little Daling in her cot beside me loudly complaining under the irritation of chicken pox "Amah," I complained, when that worthy appeared "why is there such a dreadful noise downstairs?"

"It is the Christians in from Ox bridge, who are crying about their destroyed houses and weeping for the loss of their stolen farm beasts' said she shortly, as if it were a matter of course

And for upwards of fifteen years such was the normal state of affairs with us in the City of the-South For Christians to appeal to the officials for protection was usually to appeal to those whose sympathies were all with the aggressors and whose inclinations were to treat the injured as if they were the culprits It was ever Sing Su's aim to keep away from the law courts and only as a last resort did he sanction an appeal by the Christians for their Rights, in this struggle not only for their own but for the religious liberty of a law abiding section of the community In most cases his policy was to appeal rather to the sense of simple justice amongst the best people of the place where the friction had risen Often his confidence was not misplaced

Indeed in all this if in nothing else it would seem as if Sing Su and such as he were public benefactors to the people among whom they dwelt They were struggling for the same freedom to worship the one God which was accorded to the worshippers of many gods But the sorest grief was that Sing Su, who had thrust in this sword, was not himself wounded thereby save in mind and heart and, inevitably, pocket Long suffering—that counsel of perfection—was at times strained to breaking point It certainly was with one of our consuls

'I should like to see a few cases of Christians fighting and resisting oppression' he informed Sing Su once, "by way of a change from Christian endurance!"

At last, after a surfeit of the anti foreign anti Christian type of mandarins there appeared on the scene a Chinese official who was neither antagonistic nor violently prejudiced Into his hands happily for them came the cases of persecution of Christians It seemed too good to be true

by a tassel of black silk braid Close beside him sat the young Englishman, in his tight garments, and hatless, his dark head closely cropped, first acting as teacher of English, next as pupil to the mandarin

"My friends think I am foolish," said Mr Kwo one day "for attempting to learn English at my time of life But I love knowledge and may perhaps gain something out of the attempt"

Sing Su gained more a working knowledge of Pekingese, which served him in good stead when, twenty years later, he became President of the first Imperial University in China But that tale is for a later chapter Mr Kwo's pronunciation meanwhile, never became good, and I can still produce a smile and a vivid picture of the old gentleman by asking Sing Su to lend me his *pin shil* " or *pencil*

About this time we had at the White House one of those feasts which are often employed in China to signify the end of a dispute and the resumption of more or less amicable relations Others call it burying the hatchet The occasion had nothing to do with us but related to two strangers, members of the German Alliance Mission who lived and worked in a city a hundred and forty miles up our Bowl River It was on a Monday afternoon, and as far as I could learn with no provocation whatever, save that of feeling a sense of overwhelming distaste towards these foreign invaders, that a mob surrounded the Germans' house and proceeded to attack the inmates violently, using homely but effective weapons, such as clubs and carrying poles

The onslaught was terrible, and, as did Sing Su on an earlier and similar occasion the Germans sent message after message to the magistrate announcing the condition of things and appealing for lawful protection The result was the same No help was forthcoming by way of guards, policemen, or soldiers For the two Germans it became a choice between being done to death in their own home or murdered while attempting to reach the magistrate's yamen through the ferocious mob. They essayed the latter Big, powerful Mr Klein led the way He soon received such a shower of blows on the head that, had he fallen, he must have been killed forth

with Mr Mantz, at the outset, wrested from one of his attackers a large stick with which he protected his head from the deadly blows by holding it aloft in both hands and swinging it round Picture him with his powerful arms, and the mob dodging to escape the flying circle The two men reached the yamen doors alive, and lifting up their voices, hammered thereon

"*Chao ming! Chao ming!*—Save life, save life!" they cried At last they gained admittance Once inside, Mr Klein, whose clothes were drenched in blood, collapsed One fainting turn succeeded another Indeed, so injured was he in mind and body that I doubt if he ever recovered sufficiently to remain in China—and risk another such encounter

As neither apology nor satisfaction for the outrage could be obtained locally, the less injured of the two he of the whirling club, Mr Mantz came down to the City of the South, where he did little better So he went on to Shanghai where he placed the case in the hands of the German consul There I also leave it

It was because Mr Kwo and Sing Su had acted the part of friendly mediators in this trouble that, when the matter was settled the Taotai sent round to the White House the feast referred to—an acknowledgment of their services It was an excellent meal, and, to that extent, in keeping with the Taotai's dignity Feasts in China are often ordered *in toto* from a restaurant plates dishes, chopsticks, everything included On that evening about half past six two men arrived at our house bearing between them a large basket This contained the cold food already prepared and arranged on small dishes with mathematical precision They also brought an enormous steamer in which other viands, neatly arranged in their separate dishes, were placed, tier upon tier A portable stove was inserted below and in this fashion the hot part of the dinner was heated

A few minutes sufficed to set the table which looked pretty In those days a table cloth was never used among the Chinese, but in our case—doubtless as a compliment to the foreigner—one was spread Chinese dining tables in the South are square, and invariably made to seat eight people If a Chinese is

asked the number of his family, he often replies, "So many tables"—be there eight, sixteen, twenty four, or more members of the family under his roof tree These tables are higher than our Western ones, and at each corner were set three small dishes of dessert, consisting of green plums preserved in honey, peaches preserved in sugar, *yang mai*—which we called our Chinese strawberry—also stewed in honey There were French beans, almost raw, but attractively arranged in neat rows, oranges quartered, and other comestibles, built up in neat pyramids and in little dishes

Before each guest was set a small pewter wine cup of miniature dimensions, and a saucer which held small nuts and dried melon seeds wherewith to pass the time between the courses At each right hand was a pair of ebony chopsticks All these things were permanent, and remained on the table through the dinner, the centre of the table being left for the hot dishes which were brought in succession Of course, as at University dinners in Oxford and Cambridge and elsewhere ladies were rigorously excluded from these feasts though occasionally they have a feast on their own account This time, had we so desired Mrs Sea and myself might have feasted on exactly the same fare, brought to us in a back room We preferred to enjoy the fun without risk of indigestion

At dusk our friend the Venerable Mr Kwo, and the Taotai's deputy arrived in their official chairs, carried by four men in uniform and accompanied by a servant on foot As soon as Mr Kwo entered our drawing room, Mrs Sea and myself took up our coign of vantage on the side veranda, where through the long Venetian shutters half closed for our private convenience, we could see all that passed within the lamp-lit room We trusted to our invisibility but were afraid lest our uncontrollable titterings should reveal our proximity, for we could not help being amused by what we saw The stately old gentleman stood in the centre of the room whilst his servant divested him of one long silk garment after another We began to think the unrobing process would never stop! Fortunately he could not bring himself to part with a lovely cream silk robe at which the divesting hand was stayed Each garment the servant carefully folded

"Oh that our Western clothes were as easily folded," we whispered to each other.

Then there were laid aside, along with his official hat, his big bead necklace and top-boots. After all, he was only doing in the drawing-room what we relegate to the cloakroom.

Modesty compels that at Chinese feasts the chief guest requires much persuasion to take the seat of honour, which is at the host's left hand. Each guest makes a proportionate difficulty, and half an hour may be expended in putting every one into his proper seat. In deference to our less ceremonious Western custom, this was much curtailed, and soon the feast was proceeding merrily. The Chinese are prepared to devote three or four hours to a feast of such importance, and when one sees the bill of fare, one is not surprised that this feast took that length of time. The remarkable fact was that neither Sing Su nor his associate and friend, Mr. Sea, seemed one whit the worse next morning.

The hot dishes came on in slow progression; the intervals were filled with conversation, with nibbling at the nuts, and possibly the smoking of a tiny pipe of tobacco. When wine is drunk, it is from the cup of pewter or porcelain, of "just a thimbleful" style. A servant goes round to fill up the cup from relays of warmed wine served in a pewter wine-pot, not unlike a tall slender coffee-pot.

There was no written menu, but I can reproduce it—to engender in the reader either envy or thankfulness for what he has missed. The so-called "large" hot dishes were

Birds'-nest soup,
Sharks' fins,
Fish-glue soup,
Pigs' feet,
Bêches-de-mer,
Stewed chicken,
Fish balls,
Duck, fried whole.

The "small" dishes came alternately with these, and were

Pigeons' eggs,
Minced shrimps,
Fish cutlets,

Kidney balls,
Chicken cutlets,
Water lily seeds stewed in sugar,
Pi pa and lung yen stews (sweet Chinese fruits),
Stewed tendons,
Stewed eels,
Stewed fishes' lips

It is the rule not to remain long after the feast is over At the end Mr Kwo's servant brought his master's brass wash-bowl, containing hot water Out of this he wrung a small clean towel and presented it to Mr Kwo, who refreshed himself by passing it over his hands and face In hot weather I have heard of the hot cloth being passed over the back bared by a servant.

"Most refreshing," said the Englishman who told of this and who spoke from his own experience

Sedan chairs were called, and soon, after stately leave-takings, the guests departed Mr Kwo, the chief guest, left first It was a great occasion, and we had reason to hope that a kindlier feeling between officials and foreigners was thereby created in our city

Our own first serious attempt to dispense hospitality to our European friends was just as humiliating as this Chinese occasion had been glorious We had been entertained so often by consul and commissioner that it was befitting we should ourselves now take a turn I dreaded the consequences to our friends Sing Su did not, beforehand What every woman knows is that household management never presents the slightest difficulty to the best man on earth! Ah Djang was competent to make bread and satisfy our simple needs But beyond that—well, I had my doubts.

A Western woman, however practical and competent, can do no more than visit her Eastern kitchen, to see that it is kept clean Everything in it is different, and probably wrong according to her Western standard Also her presence therein is unwelcome She is in the hands of her Oriental servants, and often they acquit themselves remarkably well, in their own way But a lunch fit to set before consul and commissioner, who had trained servants from Shanghai was another

matter. Grave fears assailed me as to our wisdom in attempting it, overdue though it was.

However, Sing Su would himself be responsible for some choice freshly ground coffee. As to the rest, it would arrange itself. He had bought a large second-hand coffee-grinder at a sale in Shanghai, and on the auspicious morning fixed it up, and with much ado succeeded in grinding the beans. One o'clock brought our guests, but no welcome tiffin bell. At one-thirty I began to be unhappy. When the clock reached two, I fully expected the guests to rise, shake the dust off their feet and say they had business at home. At long last we sat down at table. We were waited upon by pock-marked Chang-loa.

To me the meal was one drawn-out agony, though the guests behaved charmingly. At last came our *chef-d'œuvre*, Sing Su's coffee, which was to atone for any shortcomings. We all sipped once: but no more.

"That coffee tasted vilely of castor-oil!" Sing Su burst out, when the guests had gone.

Then it dawned upon us that the coffee-mill had previously been used by a chemist in Shanghai wherewith to grind his castor-oil seeds. How we rocked with laughter!

Yet, coffee apart, in Chinese eyes there would have been nothing amiss in our prolonged wait. They come to a dinner prepared to spend an hour and more in pleasant anticipation and conversation; whereas we arrive on the stroke of the clock, expect to sit down to table at once, and to remain chatting, after the gastronomical part is over, for the misplaced hour which I had found so fatal as a preliminary. We did not experiment again for some time.

To revert to the Venerable Mr. Kwo, the sad day came when we had to bid him good-bye. When the great ones in our provincial capital decreed his promotion and consequent removal to a post in the City-of-Restoration, something had to be done, though not by way of appeal against his departure, for that would have been useless. But those who had the greatest reason to be grateful for his administration of justice, the Christians, determined to show their sense of his probity in an approved fashion. They gave him a state umbrella.

An umbrella is not unknown as a gift to a man in England, but it bears no resemblance to the gorgeous structure which the Christians presented to Mr Kwo His was a fine weather umbrella, made of the most vivid red satin It had three flounces attached to a round flat framework—the bones of the umbrella The handle was ten feet long, enabling the bearer to hold it aloft, and at the apex of the handle was a large heavy pewter ornament On the top flounce, and covering the flat framework, were four large characters in gold

" He looks on all with equal benevolence " they set forth

The middle flounce hung round the framework, and said by whom the umbrella was respectfully presented to the Venerable Mr Kwo, and there followed the names of the leading donors, Chinese and English The third flounce hanging further below, gave the names of the hundred and fifty places in the district which the donors represented

When the presentation was made, the umbrella was proudly carried through the admiring crowds to Mr Kwo's official residence In addition there were carried aloft wooden tablets, the upper portions of which were covered with red woollen cloth and ornamented with black velvet letters edged with gold They proclaimed that they were offered in respectful praise of the Virtuous Government of the Venerable Mr Kwo

To us these may seem peculiar ways of showing love and gratitude, but they were ways appreciated by both parties to the transaction Mr Kwo never returned to the City of the South Years later his daughter came back, and, strange to say she became a teacher in the girls' school which I had founded

(1)

ONCE, in our City of the South, I set out with the intention of counting how many I met who were pitted with smallpox, but when I reached into the scores, they were too numerous, and I gave it up I recall having heard it said that, from the dowry point of view, a woman who had had smallpox was of greater financial value, she being thus insured against contracting it again The theory is that people should go out when they have the Great Guest, smallpox, but remain indoors when they have the Little Guest, measles

The people believe that most, if not all, sickness is caused by evil spirits, and they have their own orthodox methods of dealing with them Epidemics of cholera and typhoid are perhaps the worst visitations of evil spirits and every year or two these grow out of hand and become rampant Hundreds nay thousands, die Sometimes the coffin makers cannot make coffins fast enough, the death wail is constantly heard, creating a terrible feeling of depression The loud weird cries of women mourning beside the graves, or coffins on the hill sides is so affecting that one longs for them to stop their wailing One tries to comfort the soul with the thought that these public manifestations of grief are sometimes done as a duty

In an epidemic of cholera, which usually happens in the autumn, evil spirits have taken possession of our city, and their anger must be appeased by feasts gifts and ceremonies But the chief thing is to be rid of them and to hasten their departure the citizens *sung-yue*, or Send a Boat Three times do I remember this Sending a Boat Each time the great religious observance cost thousands of dollars and was largely contributed to by the rich On the last occasion a banker subscribed a hundred dollars and sums given varied from a hundred to half a dollar

With part of the subscriptions is made a huge full sized boat of bamboos Into this are put the offerings of the people

in the shape of models of chairs, tables, cooking utensils, besides rice, dried fruits, clothes, cash or copper money Even a tiny opium pipe is added for the delectation of the spirits These objects remain in the Boat for the seven days during which the vessel stands in one of the chief temples and the Boat looks very gay with its decorations of coloured flags and sails Everything is of paper, both the Boat and its contents, except the bamboo framework of the keel Whilst it is waiting at the temple, a contingent of twenty priests chant prayers and petitions there from eight in the morning till midnight—expecting to be heard for their much speaking, it would seem

The last year a pathetic incident roused the sympathies of all The eldest son of a widow took cholera, and when death approached he called to his distracted mother

"I know I am dying My soul is already on the Boat,' he said

With streaming hair, token of deepest distress, the poor woman at once went to the temple, and kneeling down beside the Boat cried aloud to the evil spirits

"Give me back my son's spirit!" she prayed "Give me back my son's spirit!"

But, in spite of all her entreaties, her son died

On the first of the seven days during which the Boat remains at the big temple, a number of the gods from other temples are invited to come there also *En route* they are carried through those parts of the city supposed to be under their special protection I had a full view of two of these gods in their large gaily decorated sedan chairs They were carved in wood, and grandly dressed in beautifully embroidered silks and satins One god s face was painted bright red, another blue Others had white or gold faces, but no green ones were in evidence, though I know not why After the inspection of their districts these gods were taken to the Boat temple, where they remained for the seven days during which the priests were chanting petitions

We were warned that the Boat would come along our front street on Saturday evening about eight o'clock, which meant that the evil spirits were then to be escorted out of the city

in state. When the loud uproar announced the approach of the procession, Sing Su and I, with one or two others, stood outside our door, as much in the shadow as possible, lest we bring more evil upon them. We waited. Presently on came the great throng. Hundreds and hundreds of men marched along in a disorderly sort of order, about six abreast. Each held aloft a lighted lantern, and shouted the peculiar cry with which boatmen start their journeys.

As a rule the religious ceremonies we see in the City-of-the-South are disappointing. But on this occasion, helped by the thought of the dying hundreds, the sight of the vast multitude's evident sincerity and the sound of their piercing cries thrilled us through. On came the Boat, borne on the shoulders of many men. Next came four smaller boats, all alight with hanging lanterns. After these came the gods who had been the visitors at the temple. More men carried lanterns, and a large following of people completed this remarkable procession. Those who were not doing duty in it were sitting quietly in their darkened houses, without lights, afraid to watch the procession lest the evil spirits should know of their presence and injure them in passing.

"This is the first time we have ever dared to do this thing," said the two Christian women who stood with us.

When the procession reached the outside of the city gate, with as little disturbance as possible the big Boat was fastened to two small boats. The people cried meanwhile to the spirits in the Boat after this fashion:

"We people of the City-of-the-South are a poor, wretched, miserable set, not worth attention. *But a little distance down the river is a fine large city. There the people are much richer, and the women more beautiful, and they invite you to go there and thoroughly enjoy yourselves!*"

One or two men then towed the Boat a mile or two down the river to the foot of a hill, where they set it on fire and burnt it. The people who formed the procession returned to the city. But before stealthily entering the gates, they carefully blew out the lights in every lantern, lest the evil spirits should again come creeping back with them. Once inside, with the big gates shut and barred, they relit their lanterns,

and went home rejoicing in the belief that again the demons of sickness and death were exorcised from their homes and the city

(II)

The outstanding event of another year was the arrival of another Boat! This was the arrival of the then Admiral of the British China Squadron, Sir Edward Seymour, in his flagship As this ship drew too much water to come up the Bowl, it was anchored about twelve miles below the city Sir Edward and some members of his staff were to have lunched with us at the White House, but a message came that as it was Sunday the Admiral would spare his men and only come up to tea in the afternoon

Sir Edward was tall and thin and, though unassuming, of distinguished appearance and bearing This need not be wondered at, seeing that almost without a break since the time of Henry the Eighth, members of his family had been officers of high rank in the British Senior Service His manners had the simplicity of the truly great, and it seemed impossible for any save evil doers to stand in fear of him On the other hand his handsome Staff Officer filled me with seemly awe so unapproachable was he in his gorgeous uniform and with his touch me-not, ramrod style of dignity I mentally beg his pardon for speaking thus of him though he will never know either how much I admired him or loved his Admiral Sir Edward at once was chatting with Sing Su about the progress of his work Next, from me he wanted to know how we had managed to exist so long in this outlandish corner of the world In satisfying his curiosity I had occasion to reply

'I came to the City of the South just after the Riot

Presently, when he wished to date some other event I replied

'But that was before the Riot'

He looked quizzingly at me smiled, and retorted

But I do not know when the Riot was!

It is a habit we have I answered of dating our occurrences that way It made so much impression on us"

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The time came when he, the great sea-officer, who entered active service at the age of fifteen, also had both a time and a place from which to date events in China. Everybody knows of the first gallant, but unsuccessful, attempt to relieve the suffering foreigners besieged in the Legations in Peking in 1900. As Commander of the International Naval Brigade, Sir Edward set out from Tientsin to their help. Within forty miles of Peking, he found the Chinese forces arrayed against him so overwhelming that, to save his small army from extinction, for perhaps the first time in his remarkable career he had to turn his back to the foe. His indifference to personal danger was phenomenal. On this arduous advance on Peking in 1900, we learnt that it was with difficulty he could be persuaded to move at more than a walking pace under the hottest fire. It was only the assurance of his staff that, if he walked, they must keep the same pace, that induced him to step out briskly.

I have wondered if that Retreat, the news of which was received with consternation by ourselves while we were in England, was not also an outstanding event from which he, too, dated other episodes in his life in the Flowery Land. The relief of Peking had to be organized after that Retreat on a larger scale, because the Imperial troops had joined forces with the Boxers, and both alike were bent on the extermination of the foreigners, root and branch. Sir Edward, a very Perfect Knight, was in China in 1857, before many of us were born. But he died in his bed in England, in 1929, nearly ninety years of age, honoured and respected by all—though a bachelor to the end!

(iii)

Meanwhile the work he had asked about progressed, although Sing Su on a certain day pronounced judgment on himself.

"I am lazy," said he. "It is easy," he continued further, "to set the ball rolling."

"*Is it?*" *I asked doubtfully.*

"The difficulty lies in following hard after it," said he.

That is the rub When a man's work is at the ends of the earth, there is usually no one to follow him up, to bid him do this or that He is left to his own initiative—or lack of it He can make, or mar, both his work and his character at one and the same time

"I am not going into the country this week as I arranged," Sing Su would remark on a rare occasion

I knew he said this partly to see what encouragement towards slackness he would receive from his 'outside conscience

"Oh, but you are going, you know, all the same," I would calmly reply

And the victim would meekly depart, reinforced by his roll of bedding his food basket, his medicine box

Yet why should he go? From the human standpoint there was nothing worth going for The scenery he knew by heart The people, with notable exceptions, were unlearned and ignorant men. Everything else was hard physical discomfort Home was infinitely better What or who, then, should prevent his remaining in the White House, there enjoying and employing himself with his books?

The secret of Sing Su's service lay hidden in the bygone years when, as a youth, he had made the Great Surrender than which nothing on earth is more mysterious and energizing Powerful yet inexplicable, it shatters the self made ambitious plans of life as already laid down When this superhuman element gains entrance into a life, it can generate a love which far surpasses the love of women It sends men, and women too, into lonely desert places The Arctic regions know them, as do the islands of the seas where, because of it, some have given their bodies to be devoured by human beasts This driving power comes in varying forms perchance in the semblance of a dove, or as the gentle rain from heaven or it may descend as a tornado, a mighty rushing wind sweeping all before it Let it come as it will it fills the house, the heart of the favoured one Life is never the same again He, or she, may live long enough in this bewildering world to doubt most things My own father was led once in his old age to question the beneficence of Providence exhibited in his own trying circumstances

"But whatever happens now, I can never doubt the power that *has* worked mightily in me formerly," he confided to me

As a youth in England, Sing Su was bookish, as befitted an embryo lawyer Midnight would find him poring over his studies, and seven in the morning saw him seated with a tutor Late one night, hours after his father's busy household was hushed in sleep, he closed his books On the table lay a magazine, and for a moment's diversion before retiring he took it up, idly turning its pages This proved his undoing The magazine contained an urgent appeal for a young man to go at once to the City-of-the South, to fill the gap left by the previous young men who had fallen by the way Swift as the arrow from a tight-strung bow did the conviction pierce to the very centre of Sing Su's being

"Thou art the man!"

How hateful the thought! Never had the Celestial Empire with its shaven headed, be queued denizens done other than repel The pictures of them in books were distasteful He would hurry over the pages to find somebody or something more pleasing to his boyish fancy No wonder, then that he fell on his knees on the floor

"Anywhere but China! Anywhere but China, Lord!" he cried

Yet here and now the needs of that distant City of the South were being forced upon him with an insistence that no prejudice could withstand True, there was still a chance that his sacrifice would not be accepted of man *Ah yah!* Of the two who volunteered for the empty outpost, the lot fell on Sing Su There was no escape *Ambitions, laudable in* themselves, and dear to the heart of youth, had to go College, *scholastic attainments university training all had to be thrown* overboard

Sing Su left England in the autumn of 1882, expecting never to return What made his going obligatory was the conviction that he possessed something worth giving to China something worthy of her acceptance especially by the unsophisticated, simple hearted, patient tillers of the soil, the farmers, whom the Westerners who know them best love to

think of as the backbone and hope of China Which attitude of mind twenty five years of living amongst them but serves to accentuate

Farming in England may be laborious, but it bears no comparison to the heavy toil, the extreme physical discomfort which even now accompanies the cultivation of rice in South China When ploughing his fields, the farmer goes barefoot over the rough hard soil When he harrows it, he himself is the weight standing on the harrow When he transplants the vivid green young rice from the corner of his thickly sown plot to his wide fields, his ankles are deep in mud and water When he weeds the rice, he kneels in the same slush, and later goes verily like a beast of the fields clearing the roots with his bare hand, working his way practically over every inch of wet ground on his knees If it is pouring with rain, or if he is under a blazing sun, he wears on his back a shield of plaited bamboo which covers him from head to tail as a protection from either On beholding for the first time this strange shape thus arrayed, one asks in astonishment

" What can this new specimen of huge carapace be crawling on the ground ? "

For hard, unmitigated toil it is irrigating which takes the palm It answers exactly to our idea of the treadmill If the rains are insufficient to keep the fields well under water, the lack must be supplied from the freshwater canals, often near at hand, and by means of the ' water carriage ' Otherwise the young rice will die This machine, or ' carriage," resembles a narrow flight of wooden steps placed slantwise in a long wooden box One end of the carriage is put into the water, the other is raised to the level of the fields needing the water The steps in the box are connected together by an endless chain, which two or three men, standing at the head, keep in constant circulation by the movement of their feet This forces the water up into the fields The principle reminds one of the moving stairway at some London railway station, with this difference, that in China it is not electricity but manpower which keeps the stairs revolving The unfortunate farmers who stand at this work all day beneath a burning sky become tanned to an African ebony

Have I pictured Chinese farming at its most arduous? Certainly it was this class which called dumbly, yet insistently, through the pages of that magazine for knowledge of God to be taken to them Or they might never receive it at all It was the tillers of the soil who led to Sing Su's confirmed habit of regular disappearances into the country, and reconciled him to periodic absences from home for five-and-twenty years Nor is this the place to tell how nobly he was emulated by the colleagues who joined him at intervals, after his ten years' service alone

But Sing Su had different methods with the high and mighty, the officials with whom he had to deal in after years in the far north of China

"I notice you never try to impose your Western belief on us," one such said to him

"No," he replied, "like your own Confucius in similar circumstances, I am waiting for a price—that is, until you want it" Offering a "price" means a desire for some object

The official courteously replied: "Some day you shall tell me about it"

Many were the redeeming features of those early incessant wearisome wanderings On hill tops, or in deep sheltered valleys, when the day's work was done, the shouting and the tumult died away, Sing Su would sit by the warm wood embers of the rice pan fire in some country house, feeling at home with the kindly farmer, who on rare occasions was also a scholar with the coveted degree He would answer his questions about the distant Island which had sent Sing Su to them As the shadows deepened, their only light but a tiny flicker from the bit of wick lying in a saucer of local oil, they would confer together on the weightier matters of law and grace, and China's needs The beautiful way in which some elderly men of whom I wot sat at the feet of the young foreigner in their craving for more Light brought him to their feet in affectionate gratitude

Then would come the long journey home again To accomplish it in one day often meant rising before dawn There would be the quick tramp, with the dear "Buffalo" and his



Photo by G. V. Kirkson, H.B.M. Consular Service

The Willing Peasants
They give us more than we ask so little

sturdy companion Si ko, swinging the empty chair along like a plaything, the glory of the sun's gorgeous ascent over the mountain tops, the pure air with never a breath of contamination These were compensations of no mean order

At certain seasons country work called a halt This was when the folks were too busy and driven to listen, and, again, in the hottest season, so provocative of cholera and dysentery that living amongst the villagers was ill-advised Such were the times when Sing Su could, with a good conscience, follow his natural bent and "enjoy laziness" On to our quiet eastern upstairs veranda, looking towards the ancient city wall, with the intervening houses shimmering in the blaze of heat, he got *him a straight-backed deck-chair On this, with feet up,* he could work comfortably Out of a piece of board he and the carpenter improvised an upright stand which held, in front of him, such mighty tomes as Williams' and Giles' Chinese dictionaries On his right and his left hand were chairs holding numerous learned books of reference

Thus would he sit, often motionless, so long that he might have impersonated a living Buddha, could he but have ceased the regular shaking of one foot! Silently he would weigh and ponder sentences, meanings, equivalents, in the Chinese characters Offences, indeed, would come in the shape of interruptions The Bright One, padding along the floor in his cloth-soled shoes, would intimate that Mr Somebody from Somewhere *wished to see him Down he would go to exchange* the study of one kind of hieroglyphic for that of another—the human soul

Nor were those beatific days of "laziness" unfruitful, despite the ejaculation I heard one day "No one will ever use it!" This referred to the system of learning Chinese which he had evolved, and which he embodied in *The Students' Pocket Dictionary* False prophet, he, for is there a student of Chinese who does not value and employ it, whether he hail from London or New York, Berlin or Tokio? Thirty years' use sees it in its twelfth edition

Other hot seasons saw the romanization of our dialect, the translation of the New Testament into the same dialect, the

writing of *A Mission in China*, and the translation of the Analects of Confucius

I could wish Sing Su, that the results of my kind of "laziness" were equally fruitful You little thought where the launching of your Spirit Boat would lead when you were set adrift from Western shores

IV THE WHITE HOUSE

CHAPTER XIV THE ARRIVAL OF SEA BORNE

TIME and again I made my boast that never once during all the years had I been afraid of any Chinese that is singly though not collectively and in mobs Then one day ten years after my arrival this self satisfying delusion deserted me From some deep crevice of the brain there sprang up in front of me sharp and distinct the picture of a solitary Chinese who had made me afraid horribly so And because I had taken credit for courage so I must humble myself now by admitting loathsome cowardly fear which happened long before

I had been eighteen months in our city It was hot weather and when evening came every breath of air felt lacking in any quality except stagnant pea soup heaviness which hung about the White House and pervaded the city The knowledge that Sing Su was indefinitely held up by callers led me to take the unusual course of setting off alone in search of a breeze I first walked through the quiet streets to the foot of the hill up which I mounted I passed the picturesque temple bowered in trees which overlooks the city Half way up I turned along the narrow path which winds pleasantly round the hill to the opposite side and on until it ends in the grass grown battle mented city walls Over this I should find I knew outspread far below a fine view of the Bowl winding its way for circuitous miles down to the Island of Jade Ring and the sea Thence—blessed thought!—would blow in our cool reviving wind for a few hours Half way round the green wooded hill was a little shrine built so close to the narrow footpath that any wor slipper before it filled the path Impeding my way stood a respectably dressed Chinese offering incense and bowing reverently before the small god enclosed in the quaint brick built tiny structure He and I were alone Though I did not enjoy the situation it never occurred to me to show the white feather by turning round and hurrying back to the city side of the hill I soon wished I had done so

When I reached the shrine the man instead of standing

courteously aside to let me pass, displeased me by at once leaving his devotions and coming and walking closer at my side than was polite He looked queerly at me, talking all the time Neither did his appearance reassure me I was certain he was not an ordinary normal decent Chinese To make matters worse, I was totally unable to understand what he said, and even if I had done, my Chinese was far too immature to enable me to send him about his business

I was terrified especially as I had no expectation of meeting any other Westerner on the hill at this hour My one hope lay in the knowledge that, some distance further and close to the city wall itself, stood another temple Alas, never once had I seen its doors open! Always they had been shut, and the place apparently deserted Why should they be open now for my particular benefit? All that I dared hope was that the unwanted companion close at my side would allow me to reach unmolested those closed doors On them I would hammer for dear life, if haply there might be some one inside to respond though I doubted it

Truly my guardian angel which a dear old blind friend long dead in England had promised to be stood at attention that day Behold on coming into view of the temple, who should be there for the first and last, time in history but a priest! He stood outside the open door as if awaiting somebody I hesitate to say myself With the man still at my heels I marched boldly up to the priest, and pointing an accusing finger at my companion said emphatically in Chinese

'Keh kai nang fu hoe! Keh kai nang fu hoe!—That man not good!" Or as we should say, 'He is a bad man'

The priest saw my perturbation and the man and at once grasped the situation What he said I could not tell but with commanding gesture he vigorously, yet quietly, uttered sentiments of such a nature as without a protest, sent the other down the hill in the direction ordered by the priest, the opposite of that from which we had both come Yet the leering creature turned his head more than once before disappearing over the brow of the hill to see which way I was going in the hope of again waylaying me

I too, must now move away, but I dreaded leaving the

priestly protection lest the enemy reappear How I longed for the priest to say he would escort me safely back round to the city side of the hill, when all danger would be past He did *nothing of the sort, so, gratefully acknowledging his help,* yet with limbs still shaking, I set off alone, the spirit gone out of me On reaching home, I had barely enough self-possession left to tell my tale before breaking into uncontrollable sobs · to the utter consternation of Sing Su Yet I knew he thought I had exaggerated the situation I had not Never to the best of my knowledge did I see either villain or priest again But neither shall I say I was never afraid

It is no uncommon thing for a Chinese woman when in distress to assail high heaven with her cries Once I myself claimed that privilege It was in the autumn of 1887 on the China Sea Then I lifted up my voice, and called for my mother

Over two years had elapsed, and again we must make the two-hundred mile voyage to the City of the-Peaceful Wave, and for the same reason as before We had no doctor equal to the occasion On going aboard our old tub, *Eternal Peace,* I was first rowed over to the River's Heart to bid adieu to my friend, the consul s wife Was it unutterable weariness or foreboding which wrinkled my face into tears as I strove in vain to speak farewell ?

In addition to Da-ling, now a sturdy two year old, we had with us Ah Djang, the yeast and bread maker and his kindly pock marked wife She continued to serve us as amah for six necessitous years of our history

The Captain of the *Yung Ning* was a tall and handsome Dane who spoke excellent English

" Better even than Danish now " he said His father was a dean of the church at home which one could well believe

The first mate was English, and the engineer was of course Scotch Indeed, it is a hackneyed saying that if you put your head outside your cabin door and call ' Mac ! " you are certain of a response from the engine rooms along the China Coast Everything went well until we steamed out of the Bowl River mouth and into the open sea Then the *Gift of* God " began to kick in Ah Djang's arms

"I want to get out and walk!" she insisted Amah was already prostrate with *mal-de mer* in the regions below, and I saw her no more till the end of the voyage We were evidently in for a bucketing The long cane chair on which I rested was tied fast by the thoughtful first mate

"My ropes and knots always hold, however near the ship comes to rolling over or standing on end," said he

Everybody who could be was deadly sick, including Sing Su He came aboard tired out with his multitudinous arrangements for enabling the Chinese to carry on in his absence

I longed to remain on deck all night, fearing the close cabin, but at dusk Sing Su, the captain, and first mate came in a body to insist on conducting me safely across the pitching deck to the cabin The consideration and kindness of those men was beyond words The captain impressed on me how impossible it was that I should be pitchforked out of the well boarded berth he had given up to me Because of the storm he was out on deck all night, but he came into the cabin for something he needed about two in the morning, a huge grey woolly figure looming up in that tiny place

"Captain, have you any chloroform?" I asked

"No, but I have some laudanum," he replied, and speedily brought me a dose, adding, "Take this and you will feel better"

Sing Su, taking what rest he could on the couch under our port hole, also had the worst time of his life, what with his own sufferings—and mine We reached Montague Rock about five in the morning, and there, into this tempestuous world of wind and waves, was ushered a brown-eyed, black haired elfin boy No doctor or nurse or woman at hand, black white or yellow In fact, no anything Even my trunks had been stored below and were impossible to reach in this awful weather

The babe's Knights of the Bath were Sing Su, who is English, and Archie the Scotch engineer, who brought water to the cabin door When I protested that the jorum of water, big enough to drown him, in which it was proposed to lave the poor infant, was "rusty boiler water," Sing Su hotly maintained that it was "all right"! On reaching finally the river of the City of the Peaceful Wave a flag for medical assistance was hoisted,

and it brought to our aid instantly the port doctor, a tall young Irishman

Thus England, Scotland, and Ireland presided over the nativity of this scion of Neptune In addition he was born in a Chinese steamer, off the China Coast, and in the cabin of a Dane What could the most ardent internationalist ask more of any mother or son ?

My method of leaving the ship was also of the strangest. Attired in one of Sing Su's white shirts, and then swathed in blankets, I was carried by the stalwart Irishman to a long cane deck chair, which was fastened with ropes to the big iron hook of the crane used for the lowering of cargo Then I was swung boldly out, to clear the ship's side, and lowered into the Chinese sampan waiting below

" Don't be afraid, don't be afraid ! " reiterated the friendly first mate, who presided over the unusual performance " I went over the same way when I broke my leg "

" I am not afraid," I had to laugh in response , " for I know if I fall in you will fish me out "

Our destination was a mile away, the house of our Veteran On arriving, the good doctor, distrusting Sing Su's strength, himself carried me up the steps from the river, along the garden-path, and up the wide stairs to the room prepared by our kind hostess, with never a halt and only a little hurried breathing and redness of face For two days all went well, and then began the worst illness any one could suffer, and survive

" My head ! My head ! " I cried, like the Shunammite boy

Yet live I did, after a terrible experience What is more to the point, " Sea borne " lived also That was thanks largely to the generous Yorkshire woman who, because I was too ill, nobly allowed him a share in her own babe's pure sustenance

It was in this fashion that on the far flung Eastern front a handful of Queen Victoria's loyal subjects celebrated Trafalgar Day in the year of Her Majesty's Jubilee, 1887 !

I must end this chapter of accidents with another catastrophe For some reason our handsome captain lost his post He drifted Ultimately he fell into the toils of a fellow-Scandinavian who proposed that he should captain a ship filled with

contraband arms, which together they would run to the Achinese, then in rebellion against the Dutch in Java The two were caught red-handed, and sentenced The worst offender was sentenced for only eighteen months, our captain for three years During his imprisonment in that Dutch prison near the Equator, to our grief he died

All we had left of him who had been a true friend in time of need were the silver christening cup he presented to the babe born on his ship, and whom he sometimes affectionately called his 'little ship's boy," and a small dog named Arabi, after the famous Pasha of that day, whom he gave to the children Arabi became an integral part of our household, retaining me as his slave, even to the extent of my rubbing him with ointment and covering him with little jackets during •mange Arabi was a renowned beggar people dubbed him " the dog who was always hungry " He long outlived his unfortunate former Danish master, and was never content unless he knew the exact spot where I might be found

It was good to reach the City of the South again with the two children though even then all was not always serenity Our small maiden, Da ling was such a bundle of vitality that I found it difficult in our circumstances to keep pace with her demands for activities

' What can I do next ? " was her recurrent cry

Two of old Mr Yang's schoolboys were dear intelligent laddies, and came to school so clean and tidy that I welcomed them as playmates for her The father of the two boys had a barber's shop in our back street, and here, doubtless, the sorry mischief originated The elder boy stopped coming Next Da ling developed a skin disease which concentrated itself in a virulent attack all over her sweet face The sight of the child sickened my heart and distressed my mind beyond words Shockingly disfiguring were those fearfully deep sores and who could tell the results ? Our old friend, the American prescribed No improvement happened Then it was told me that the absent boy had the same complaint But to my surprise he by name Studious Virtue, reappeared after what seemed but a short time, completely cured

" What has done it ? I asked of Amah

" Medicine," she briefly replied She probably was mentally comparing the ineffectiveness of the foreign medicine I had so assiduously applied in vain with the speedy efficiency of theirs

" Where can it be had ? " I asked

" At the medicine shop up the back street," she rejoined

" Can I buy some ? " came next

" Certainly," was the quick reply

' Then go and buy some this very minute," I ordered

It came, it conquered Soon those awful sores had disappeared The remedy had the same effect on the white skinned foreign child which it had had on the Chinese boy On neither face, praise be was a trace of the disease left

CHAPTER XV BRIGANDS AT RAINBOW BRIDGE

(i)

IF it fell to my lot to keep Sing Su with his forehead to the grindstone, our two yearlings were equally effective in pinning me down to the City-of-the-South. Sometimes I wearied of the solitary monotonous routine: shut in and shut out as I was, year in and year out, from the interests and pleasures of the great outside world. An occasion arose, however, when I was able to escape, thanks to the kindness of an English girl. She counted it a privilege to have for ten days the companionship and care of two small English children.

"They are adorable," said she. Was it because there were no others with whom to compare them?

I was more anxious for adventures than Sing Su; possibly because I experienced fewer. I had wanted to visit Rainbow Bridge long before the chance came, and here it was. I began preparations for the starting on the Friday evening. Sing Su came in on Thursday night.

"So you think you are going to Rainbow Bridge, do you?" he said.

Being of the cautious Yorkshire temperament, I hesitated to commit myself, and replied that I had thought so.

"I am sorry to say I don't think you are!" he answered; and you can imagine my chagrin.

"Why?" I queried.

"Because I have just heard that Sunday will be market-day. The market is held thrice a month, and for all the district. Thousands of people will be there. If you are present also, far more people will come to church than we can accommodate: and there may be the dickens to pay!"

Though most unwilling to forfeit my trip, I admit the prospect disturbed me. Big unmanageable crowds haunted my waking and sleeping hours; thoughts of an unprofitable time for Sing Su—if no worse—because of overwhelming numbers of those merely interested in staring at the foreign woman: these disturbed my conscience. To go or not to go, hung in the balance. We slept on it, and decided in accordance with

my secret wishes. We would risk the consequences, not knowing when the opportunity would come again.

Late on Friday evening, food, bedding, and ourselves were aboard the comfortable house-boat on which we slept. During the night we slipped down river with the tide for an hour, then anchored till next morning. After breakfast and delicious incomparable toast made over our simple clear charcoal fire, we left the house-boat, walked a short distance, and stepped into a small boat on the canal.

The waterways of South China are wonderful. Some of the canals are as wide as our English rivers, run long distances, and are often beautiful. We sat in the bottom of the little boat, our bedding making excellent back-rests, being so arranged by our youthful attendant, the Bright One. The canal carried us "past twenty towns and half a hundred bridges." At one o'clock we stopped outside the temple of The Narrow Gate, where we ate our lunch and obtained boiling water for our coffee. I wandered round the temple, wherein were numberless gods and many priests. One of the latter made an old-world bizarre picture in his long coloured patchwork gown: a veritable Joseph's coat, quaint and clean. In front of the temple was the remains of a huge tree completely hollow, but inside the empty shell had sprung up a fine tall strong tree: the living from the dead.

At three in the afternoon we reached the City-of-Clear-Music —Ngoh-ts'ing. When I say "city" in this connection, pray do not visualize Liverpool or Cincinnati or Düsseldorf, or even a small English country town. This city had little in common with such. There were no railways, cars, cabs, horses, or carts; no mills, gas, or electric light. Nothing but the long rows of one-storeyed dwellings, plenty of empty spaces, and several fine canals. Round the whole was a high ancient broken stone wall.

We found our way to the building Sing Sa had rented, which was small, but clean. The caretaker was out, news-hunting. The man in charge at once informed us we could go no further. News had just come that Rainbow Bridge had been looted by a horde of over a hundred brigands, who had swooped down on it from the hills at eleven o'clock that very morning! Did we need proof? Two dissevered heads had already been brought

to the yamen—Clear-Music being the head magistracy of the district, despite its poor appearance

Here was a poser, worse than the market day I seemed fated never to reach Rainbow Bridge, and all our Chinese friends were doing their best to dissuade us from running our heads into such a noose Yet the thought of turning back now was ignominious Sing Su himself had no such intention He could not disappoint those who, even in these circumstances, might expect him But I was an appendage, bent merely on the pleasure of going to "look see" A brilliant thought struck us Now that the brigands had already been to Rainbow Bridge, it was one of the safest places in the world! We salved our consciences with the idea that if matters were as terrible as reported, it would still be possible for me not to enter Rainbow Bridge, which is a small unwalled town, but to turn aside at Cove Bank, where lived one of our assistants

Before we left Clear Music the big drums in the yamen were being beaten—calling in soldiers from the fields, or other occupations We had ample proof as we proceeded that much of what we had heard was true We walked a large part of the way, to spare our chair-bearers The roads were narrow, often mere paths, with barely room to pass Soon we met a little fellow over whose shoulder hung the usual bamboo carrying pole In front, as balance, hung a big stone Only when nearly past did I see what was suspended at the back end of his pole a Chinese black haired head, which had been severed close up under the chin! It was a ghastly object, slung by the queue I shuddered, but the carrier of it did not appear to mind for he turned repeatedly to look back Probably he was wondering what we ourselves were doing at such a time, and no doubt was also congratulating himself that he had one more villain put out of action

By and by we met another man, a traveller, hurrying along, with a sword in its sheath hanging at his back He was greatly excited

"Don't go near the place! Keep far from it!" he cried out, guessing our destination

Presently we met a cavalcade of men whom we were obliged to pass at close quarters on the narrow road Between them

was a living brigand He was a sad sight—a tall upstanding man in middle life, and of a fresh complexion for a Chinese but one half of his face was bruised and bloody Before I knew, he was within two yards of me, and instinctively I shrank as far away as I could But the wretched man could harm no one now, for his hands were tied behind his back with the thick straw ropes with which they drove him along He looked at us—and never shall I forget his look of appeal Did he by chance connect us with another Man, of whom he might have heard, who was also "led to the slaughter"—for a very different cause? He could hardly stagger along, swaying from side to side as if utterly exhausted Probably he had been travelling over the hills all the previous night Then came the morning raid on Rainbow Bridge, where he was caught red handed And now this was the last lap, a painful four or five hours' tramp to Clear-Music, where he could expect no other than to have his head cut off the moment he arrived Drops of blood were on the roadway, whether from the living or the dead I know not A brigand's life is to be shunned!

Soon another batch of men appeared in sight, this time with a brigand of twenty in tow, whose face was disfigured The man who held him knew Sing Su and spoke to him, whereupon the bewildered prisoner seemed as if he too would appeal to him but to our relief refrained What could Sing Su have done, who also stood for law and order? His captor proudly told how he had captured him

"I seized him round the body, gun and all, and stuck to him!" He was taking him to the yamen, where I expect he would be rewarded The Bright One had seen two other decapitated heads being taken thither

After two more hours on the road we had to hire a boat on a canal which was so narrow that we were poled along for miles The longed-for dusk approached We met a few other boats, but none going in our direction All were headed for Clear-Music, and carried a number of captive brigands who lay trussed like fowls in the bottom of the boats On nearing Rainbow Bridge we had a startling encounter A boat suddenly pushed out from an opening in the canal, to prevent us going further Rusty matchlocks were thrust into our faces

"Who are you?" an authoritative voice demanded.

Now Sing Su had cautioned our boatman not to volunteer the information that we were foreigners from the City-of-the-South. If questioned, he was to say we were visitors, "guests," from that city. But the point-blank question was too much. Sing Su took the words out of the boatman's mouth.

"I am Sing Su," he replied.

"Oh!" was the rejoinder. "If you are Sing Su, you can go forward."

"This," declared Sing Su to me, "is the proudest moment of my life. They distinguish me from the brigands!"

The nearer we approached our destination, the greater our anxieties increased, largely on my account. How was I to escape observation in an uncovered boat? I tried to hide by putting on Sing Su's long wadded gown, and thus encased, lay huddled in the bottom of the boat like a sleepy Chinese. Sing Su tried to hide us all by putting up his umbrella, then realized this foreign importation would attract, rather than distract, attention. He took off his foreign felt hat, but he had no pig-tail or shaven front head, and I longed for the orthodox round black satin Chinese hat for him.

Many were the curious glances cast at us from the banks and bridges. It was a relief when we arrived at half-past seven in the evening, unmolested, at the back of our quiet compound, where we found a number of Christians waiting to give us a cheerful welcome. First of all, the new premises called for inspection. They were remarkably clean and tidy, and worthy the pride which the good folk had in them. Be it remembered that here soap, and even hot water, are luxuries costing money: which accounts for much in China. The room prepared for us delighted me, knowing what I do of the usual conditions. The furniture was simple. The *tsung-pae*, or bed, was a framework of unvarnished wood like the outline of a door, across which was laced a network of brown coir string. On this, without fear of pests, we spread our wadded quilts and bed coverings. A couple of chairs and a table completed the suite. And—wonder of wonders!—here was the first stained floor I had ever seen in a Chinese house. "To put paint where it will be walked

on is indeed the height of splendour," remarked a woman to me once

After a meal we went into the church If I had wished to see the new building, and the place, how much more the people? Many of their names were household words yet some of them I now saw for the first time I looked at Sie-sa the ex-opium-smoker, almost with reverence When he decided to cut off opium, he determined to do it at home, without medicine or help He suffered so horribly that his own wife, the greatest victim of his habit, believing him to be dying brought him his opium pipe

"Save your life, and take a few whiffs," she begged

"No, if I am to die," he said refusing it, "I 'll die now having the approval of God and my own conscience If I yield, opium will be the destruction of me, body and soul" He endured, and soon the worst was past · and here he was

I found also the young man dubbed by us Nicodemus, because his usage was to come stealing in at night and sit with his back to the preacher as if paying no attention But as he also appeared the next morning, I hoped he had advanced a step I liked the bright faced youth whose grandmother had tried hard to induce him to take Wife Number Two which boon he as steadfastly resisted Of unique interest was the old ex pugilist, formerly a terror for miles round None dared to thwart him or resist his demands When out of funds, he had the charming way of picking up a lump of stone, going into a shop and banging it down on the counter.

"I want a dollar for this," he would assert

He duly received it: though I somewhat hesitate at disclosing so simple a method of replenishing one's pocket! If not actually thieves, both he and his wife were known to receive stolen goods Yet here they were now, respected members of society.

(11)

I have left to the last the most touching and pathetic figure At home amongst these poorer folk was a dignified old country gentleman of eighty-one With his blooming great grandson,

he had walked the fifteen miles necessary to bring him, the day before, to Rainbow Bridge Yet he refused to admit that he was tired But this is far from the only reason why this man is a marvel

He had a son and a grandson, both smokers of opium On visiting the City-of the-South, the son was so attracted by what Sing Su and his friends had to tell, that he not only asked for services to be held in his own house, but he came regularly to the monthly communion service at Rainbow Bridge Soon he felt he must stop smoking opium, and started out for our city with this objective in view Half-way he called to see a friend, a respectable man, who persuaded him to stay and be treated by him, as he had been successful in cutting off the opium of many others—after Sing Su's method Doubtless the ordinary medicines were given, principally quinine but in three days the patient was dead That was the first blow for the old father The people of the place threatened vengeance on the man who, they said, had deliberately killed the son

"Not so," said the father, and at once set off for the house where his son lay He insisted that such statements were false, and that the threats must cease Nor was this all He continued the long journey to the City-of the-South, and there pleaded that he and his family should not be deserted in their sorrow On the contrary, he asked that regular services be established in their village of Vu-yoa, offering his own guest-room for the purpose Needless to say, the offer was accepted, and all went well for a time

Then the leaven worked The dead man's only son, the old gentleman's grandson, also became pricked in his spirit He too must needs make the fatal journey to Jerusalem, and cut off what he felt was a vice Naturally, and as we should have done, both his wife and his mother besought him not to venture, to remember the fate of his father For months he yielded to their persuasion But the inner compulsion was too strong, and hearing that Sing Su was to hold teaching classes in the autumn, he could endure it no longer He came to our city, with the double purpose of attending the classes and cutting off that devastating opium, making a stern fight for manly freedom



Photo by T Butler F R G.S

The Big Street in the City of the South It runs the whole length of the city in a straight line

The gallant fellow succeeded in both, and was so delighted to be free from the spell of opium that he at once retraced the long slow fifty-five miles homewards, to show himself and relieve their fears In a few days' time he came joyously back, eager to learn Two nights before the classes ended, when he was to have *gone back home for good*, he was *in high* spirits and enjoyed himself in right boyish fashion Had he not good cause freed from the slavery of opium, and in possession of a pearl of great price ?

He retired to rest in the same room with two other men About eleven o'clock he began to breathe heavily—in his sleep his companions concluded, so for a short time took no notice A foreboding caused them to call him, and receiving no answer, they struck a light To their horror, he was unconscious In terror they *fled* across to the White House Sing Su and the doctor ran back with all speed They found him gone—*beyond recall*

It was terrible And in more ways than one Not only were we left lamenting a great loss, but we were also full of dire apprehension The death of two grown men in one family ! Only foreign diabolical magic could cause such awful deeds. Less sinister incidents had caused riots, with destruction of life and property To that family any dealings with us had indisputably carried death, and we dreaded the results. Think, too, of Sing Su's heart breaking task of sending the old father the tidings of this second blow All he could do was to write to his capable henchman, Tsang poa, or Mr Summers, and set him the miserable task of going and breaking the sad tidings to the family as best he could

" I am overwhelmed, and mourn for Shue sa as for my own brother," wrote Mr Summers in reply

His letter ended with doleful words, quite in keeping with our own feelings

" And the cause is certainly dead at Vu yoa," he said

All honour we paid to Shue sa's body A goodly coffin, which the Chinese appreciate as much as or more than ourselves, was provided In it Shue sa lay in state in the schoolroom in the White House garden Late on Saturday night relatives arrived to take the body home, and received every

consideration it was in our power to give. On Sunday afternoon the funeral cortège passed out of our compound—*the first* that had ever done so, and, so far, the last. Many joined the procession to the river's bank outside the North Gate, the chief mourners wearing squares of white cotton on their heads. Solemnly they filed out through the big front doors.

The city friends of the deceased, whom we sent to accompany the body of Shue-sa home, were wholly in the dark as to the kind of reception they would receive from the family or the villagers of Vu-yoa. It was no small act of bravery to go at all, and they went prepared to suffer. Had the whole of Vu-yoa risen *en masse*, driven them out, and next wrecked the church at Rainbow Bridge, neither they nor we would have been surprised.

Mercifully our fears, like our hopes, are not always realized. Instead, on their approach to Vu-yoa they were met by the stricken, yet great, old grandfather, followed by the rest of the family. *They came out to escort the funeral procession* to the house. They treated our representatives with great honour, and thanked them for their kindness and what had been done for this member of their line.

"This is the will of God," said the old gentleman, "and it behoves us to bow in submission."

Even the widow had no word of anger or upbraiding. It was marvellous in our eyes. All they asked was that Christian services should be continued. Was greater faith ever found in Israel? Our relief in heart and mind was intense.

Is it astonishing that in the midst of such examples of faith, character, and magnanimity even the large *horde of brigands* ceased to appal? We were in the presence of bigger things, and forgot them, at least for that sacred hour with those *wonderful people*.

(iii)

Later we learnt the particulars of the raid. At eleven that morning a band of a hundred and twenty armed men had descended from the hills and at once set about looting Rainbow Bridge, which is well-to-do. Some shops were stripped en-

tirely, others escaped, or suffered little When a number of the robbers had seized as much or more than they could carry, they left, but finding so much spoil burdensome, they threw part of it by the roadside Had they kept together all might have gone well with them, but they made the fatal error of breaking up into companies A number also stayed late behind, their depredatory instincts not yet satisfied, which gave the inhabitants their chance Seizing the stragglers, they executed summary justice upon them, which is allowed by Chinese law when robbers are taken red handed, thereby saving much delay! They cut off the heads of seven in their yards with hatchets and carving-knives A goodly number of prisoners were escorted to Clear Music where, we were told, the magistrate cut off heads till he dared no more, lest his superior take him to task for wholesale slaughter The brigands killed only one man and him more by accident than design

Warning of their coming had, indeed, been given, but as it was said that they were "only coming to attack the Christians," the people neglected all precautions

"Let the Christians suffer!" said one man He was left, later, bemoaning the loss of a hundred dollars!

The robbers passed our church that Saturday morning The door was open, and two went in and looked round Then one pulled the sleeve of the other

"Come on!" he said And off they went

Sunday morning dawned bright and clear Christians, some from long distances, came pouring in They filled every seat and the space at the back was chock-a-block with "Outsiders," or non Christians, standing The church seated two hundred and fifty, an ideal number for China, thought I There were no pews, only benches with backs, and instead of a pulpit was a graceful open work reading desk that seated four people Down each side of the building were five big windows, the roof was panelled in unvarnished wood The loveliest place on earth to many present—including ourselves

Sing Su held forth, attired in his long blue silk wadded dressing-gown—or was it the flannel one?—a much approved garb for these occasions more seemly than the pyjamas in which the exigencies of a flood once compelled him to take a

country service. Of course brigandage pointed the moral and adorned the tale of his discourse. Men had come to rob and steal with violence: their reward was death—by violence. The text was written in large Chinese characters, and hung on the reading-desk. The Chinese symbol for sin is a net! How eagerly they listened, drinking it all in: from a past-master in their dialect now, foreigner though he was!

Both services ended without disturbance, due probably to the counter-excitement of the raid. Immediately the second service was over, at three in the afternoon, the countryfolk hurried off, anxious in such parlous times to reach home before dark. The far distant ones carried paper lanterns hanging from slender long sticks. Most of them also carried their "Holy Book," or Bible, and hymn-book carefully folded in coloured handkerchiefs. I watched them as they traversed the narrow meandering paths, until the distance swallowed them. But at half-past six came news that put us all in a tremor.

"There are a thousand bandits on the hills," came the rumour. "Only a portion of them attacked Rainbow Bridge. The rest are but a few miles off, and at dark are going to make another fiercer raid—to avenge their slain companions."

Great was the consternation, for no mercy would be shown this second time. It was now our turn to be entangled in a net.

"I would like you to leave at once," Sing Su urged me.

"Where can I go?" I asked. "If I start back home with the Bright One, I shall be unendurably anxious about you: and you say you cannot and you will not leave. I prefer to stay where I am rather than travel without your protection in a boat in the dark, or on lonely roads alone."

Around us the people were hurrying themselves and their possessions off to other places. Women and children left for distant villages.

"I shall soon be the only woman left," I thought.

Guns were popping off in every direction, doubtless as a warning to all whom it might concern that now Rainbow Bridge was on the defensive.

"At noon to-day, Sunday," the Bright One informed us, "I

as so many foreigners have been since those days At two in the morning a loud hammering at the door caused me to start up

"They 've come!" I cried out

A false alarm It merely announced delegates for the church meeting next day! Firing continued all night But, to our deep thankfulness, Monday morning dawned quiet and peaceful With it came a man from the City-of the-South carrying our home mail Soon we were immersed in half a dozen Shanghai papers which told us that Western civilization still existed, and letters which said our loved ones were safe, however doubtful was our own case Staff in hand, our old gentleman started for home early, anxious about the welfare of his family He dwelt in a beautiful Chinese house, at the foot of the hills whereon the brigands were said to be The great grandson remained behind Perhaps the attractions of the Chinese pastor's daughter, to whom he was affianced, were more powerful than his fear of robbers

The church meeting seemed absorbing to the company I was on the qui vive every minute, and the pop of every gun made me jump afresh My keen desire was to escape from the place at the earliest possible moment now, though I dared not say so for greater fear of the leader of the expedition! At long last the moment of departure arrived We were late in starting —three o'clock To the very last minute the Chinese clustered round Sing Su like bees, with such a host of questions that I was amazed at the saint-like patience with which he listened and explained

Never did I turn my face homeward with greater pleasure or more intense relief, though uncertain as to what would befall *en route* We went past the house in the town where the man had been killed, and we could see his relatives "watching" inside, and hear their piteous wails As our little cavalcade marched up the long quiet street, it was hard to realize that only two days before such deeds of murder and looting had been done As we hurried through the bare rice fields, a company of soldiers in the scarlet jackets of those days, bearing long flags came marching along With them was the military official in a big sedan chair, carried by four bearers He stopped, and as Sing

Su was walking past, held out a skinny hand with claw-like nails for him to shake

"Do you come from Rainbow Bridge?" he asked 'Is all quiet there? I am going thither 'to protect the peace'"

The besotted opium smoker had waited two days before moving

"All is peaceful again," Sing Su assured him and on that he proceeded

A heavy price was demanded for a boat, but by the aid of a Christian we borrowed one! Soon we were being poled along in the quiet moonlight, only a cicada breaking the silence with its grindings In an hour, cramped with sitting, we began to walk along the lonely path, when suddenly a band of twenty men, armed with guns, loomed out of the dusk The path was so narrow that in our efforts to keep a respectful distance we both were pushed into the field Strangely ignoring us the stalwart figures went striding silently along to our satisfaction for an attack there would have been awkward for us They were men evidently not to be played with, and we could only suppose they were returning from the yamen at Clear-Music whither they had personally conducted more robbers caught on their own particular hills

It was nine o'clock when we reached Clear-Music In spite of a violent desire to push on, we were so hungry that we sent our boat round by canal outside the city walls to a certain gate, with explicit injunctions for the boatman to await us there Meanwhile we went to our place in the city to fetch the food prepared for us We piled the boiled rice into a pie-dish and after making coffee, set out through the now silent streets with these in our hands, intending to eat on the boat The gates of the city were shut, but our caretaker had a key that opened the little gate where we had told our boatman to wait He was not there! We waited, we shouted, and set off to another gate to seek him Still not there, and the process was repeated until the sleeping city rang with our combined shouts. Rice and coffee were growing cold I was "hungry to death," as the Chinese say, and could wait no longer Behold me drinking my coffee out of the teapot spout, and eating the plain boiled rice with my fingers!

It was now ten o'clock, we were comparatively safe, and the relief and the ludicrousness of it all seized me I laughed till it hurt No boat appeared, and as it seemed we might wait till morning, we hailed yet another boat, and went in search of the strayed one We encircled almost the whole city on that wonderful canal which was one hundred yards wide The moonlight row was beautiful beyond words We passed under a splendid ancient stone bridge, beyond which, in the middle of the water, uprose a picturesque temple dedicated to the god of literature The hoary old city walls, overgrown with ferns and mosses, were reflected in the water, though broken in places, and never, I trow, to be rebuilt

We found our stupid boatman at the last possible waiting stage He was quietly waiting on events, and prepared to do so till the crack of doom We settled ourselves in his boat as best we could, finished the rice and coffee, with a few added comestibles, spread our bedding in the bottom of the boat and slept the sleep that comes when nothing but sleep matters Early next morn we alighted walked the short distance to our Bowl River, where our own roomy house boat lay waiting us Then we dared openly rejoice, for we were once more at our starting point, on our own good river and out of danger If it had been possible to apply a physical test, I should have been found to consist of a solid lump of thankfulness Very little of the tide was left thanks to the delays, and do what they would, our boatmen could not make the city on the remnants Rather than wait a tide, Sing Su and I walked the few miles in to the beloved White House to find all *in statu quo*, and as if such folk as brigands were non existent Rumour had, of course been busy, in which we played an important part

Always, on nearing the city after a country journey, Sing Su's first act was to look and see if the White House still stood He wanted to know that it had not been consumed in his absence by one of the devouring fires which are a constant menace not only in the City of the South, but in every Chinese city

Once again it was standing and with friendly doors open for us

CHAPTER XVI BOARDS OF PUNISHMENT

(1)

IN those far-off years we had no refuge near by from the tropical heat of summer, but we could, and we did, claim a share in the house on the hills above the City of the-Peaceful Wave Only, however, when compelled by the condition of one or other of us did we face the terrors of the deep in the *Eternal Peace,* and the labour on land that must be endured before we could reach that high and beautiful district Rather we preferred to stay at home and press on with our work But some summers I had to take the two children and go to those hills alone, because Sing Su, being the only foreigner on that work for nearly ten years, said he could not leave it Who was I to hinder, even if I could not help ?

Two of those pilgrimages to the hills were dreadful punish ments, journeying miseries ! The first was undertaken on my account I had become the victim of large troublesome boils, or blains, which remained stationary too long, refusing to advance or recede Accompanying me on the journey were Da ling, a toddler of two and a half, and Sea-borne, aged six months. I had to carry off the Bread maker, which left Sing Su cookless, and his wife, to help with the children These two were the only people we could trust on so serious an ex-pedition We had such a rough two hundred miles of pitching and rolling up the coast that my solitary fellow passenger, a young English Customs officer, *en route* for England, showed his apprehension by coming to my door

' Don t be alarmed " he said, " the *Eternal Peace* won't turn turtle " From which I concluded he thought there was every prospect of it

Arriving in the City of the-Peaceful Wave I obeyed Sing Su's instructions and at once sent off his letter asking a friend to receive us and forward our journey We waited aboard in the heat till evening No response arrived, and Sea borne became justifiably fractious crying in my arms with weariness Happily a good Australian, a major who had fought under Gordon during the Taiping Rebellion came on board and took

pity He put us into his own boat, escorted us across to his house, and there loudly called for his wife, a Chinese lady She soon appeared, arms full of cushions on which I was made to rest in the boat She also insisted on going with us to our destination, fearing, I think, we might find no one there On arrival we found that the letter, through carelessness, had not been delivered! But we were now in good hands Our friend was alone with one Boy, his family being on the hills Food was forthcoming, and, best of all, we were, to some extent, put to bed I had enough life left in me to notice that our host himself spread the clean cool sheets on the big bed, drawn close to the veranda door to catch a stray breeze, and on to which I soon blissfully sank After that heat, that voyage, stuffy cabin, and the endless waiting, could Heaven itself contain anything better?

Such was the first stage of our journey We had three more, which ought to be made at the earliest possible moment for dear life's sake That same night our host bestirred himself, and a house boat was ordered to be at his riverside steps at half past seven next morning He also sent off a Chinese messenger—*chop, chop*, quick, quick!—to arrange for the two stages beyond The result was that next day and the following night we travelled comfortably on the canal At eight on the morning of the second day we left the house boat and walked over to a mountain stream up which we were to travel on rafts the water being too low for the ordinary boats These rafts necessarily, were small and light, and each could take so little weight that we required almost a fleet Myself and the children and our two Chinese servants were ample for one, or ought to have been? At the moment of starting I saw that our boatman had placed at the stern of our raft a huge coarse bag holding two or three hundredweight of rice Fearing this would greatly impede our progress, even make it impossible I told the Bread-maker to say that we had engaged the entire raft, and would he please remove it This the man refused to do, whereupon followed a battle of tongues But no arguments availed The man declined to leave behind the superimposed cargo, I refused to go with it At last I told the Bread maker to go to the village and find another raft

"Nobody will come," he returned to say, "as the rafts were specially ordered the night before by the Chinese pastor, who lives in a house on the bank close by"

"Go and tell him about it," I persisted

Again Ah Djang came back

"The pastor is ill and cannot come out," he informed me

This was true enough, for as we obdurately stuck there, losing the precious coolness of the morning hours out came the sick man leaning on the arm of his daughter and on a stick A still fiercer storm of words assailed the air, the pastor heaping reproaches upon the boatman, and both gesticulating violently. Nothing however, but an earthquake would move the sturdy boatman The poor sick pastor could endure no more, and he left us to our fate

"Punish him by refusing to pay at the end' was his last Parthian shot, tottering indoors

The boatman verily had us in a cleft stick Beaten and crest fallen we started and I was determined to follow the advice about the payment

The stream was more stones and boulders than water So low had it fallen that we were dragged along the bed of it By lying on the raft the children could dip their hands in the "pretty water" between the interstices of the bamboo poles of which the frail craft was fashioned We three older folk sat on the cane chairs we had brought with us Again and again in the scorching midday heat we dipped our white umbrellas in the stream then held them over our sun helmeted heads gratefully letting the drops trickle down us One lady who had gone up in advance told me later she had only been able to tolerate the heat by sitting in her vest under her wet umbrella Wee Sea borne thought my lap the most restful place, but how an angry boil contested his right there! The raft that carried our luncheon basket would ordinarily have travelled alongside, but the delay in starting left us far behind it Da ling became so ravenously hungry that when she saw our boatman snatching mouthfuls of very unappetizing rice-cakes she begged one which he gave her

That Chinese boatman worked like a veritable fury Never have I seen anything equal to the fierce human force he put

into the continuous effort of poling us over boulders, stones, and the grating river-bed. Oftener in the water than on the raft, he literally heaved us along for between three or four hours, under the broiling midday sun. Every heave seemed to say:

"I 'll show you what I can do—rice-bag included!"

When he landed us triumphantly at the head of the stream, and the time for payment came, he received the whole sum, and with never a reminder of his bad past: rather in my heart a deep gratitude for his sustained efforts and a profound admiration for his prowess. He gave so much, and he received so little—in comparison.

Here we were met by the Veteran, who had brought down mountain chairs. After some refreshment in the house of another of those sympathetic members of society, Chinese pastors, we started at two in the afternoon for our last lap Every step now lifted us up into a new world, fresh and cool, through woods and fields, our bearers sing-songing as they jaunted us nearer the skies Five o'clock saw the little tired party at the desired haven As our chairs were set down in front of the house, and the happy, care-free, healthy-looking group of women and children clustered round to welcome us, it was more than I could bear.

"Let me inside quick," I urged

I fled to my room out of sight, where I lay on my bed and wept! Such worn-out travel-stained wretches we were in comparison that I almost felt ashamed.

Next day I crawled out and sat in the pine-wood close by, hardly able to enjoy the soughing of the wind among the trees and the sweet smells Then a doctor, who fortunately was on the hills, came and lanced the boil on my thumb But in a couple of days I was seriously ill A letter was sent down to catch the *Eternal Peace*, urging Sing Su to come by return I have never quite known what that illness was, but rigors would seize and shake me horribly, as a dog does a rat. The thoughtful doctor came and slept in the house, and since that time I have believed in hypnotic powers, for on two separate occasions I then had the benefit of them

"It is coming again!" twice in the doctor's presence I cried —meaning the horrible rigor

Without a word he made passes down my body outside the bed clothes On both occasions the paroxysms subsided, dying away and out at my heels I felt them go

It was a fortnight before Sing Su could reach us, by which time I had so far recovered as to be able to go a little way down the hill in a chair to meet him Instead of a dead wife, a living one smiled at him But the poor man had physical distresses of his own which drove him straight away to the doctor's before even calling at the house

Up there on the glorious hills we were among hill men, magnificent specimens of humanity, especially some of the chair bearers Whilst I clung to the chair poles, they would dance me up almost perpendicular slopes, then sheer down into corresponding depths, enjoying these exhibitions of their strength Alas! They were a quarrelsome lot, ready and desirous to fight with the men of neighbouring villages if these seized a portion of the carrying and fetching for the foreigners At times they also were threatening to the foreigners who had brought them profit In the end most of the Westerners declined to remain the victims of their turbulence, and betook them to more peaceable hill tops elsewhere

(II)

Under the Manchu Dynasty, beneath which we survived during most of our time in China there was in Peking a Board of Punishments" which, I expect, functioned actively As far as the parental Board of Punishments in our household was concerned there was little doing On the one or two occasions when I chastised Da ling, it was invariably at the wrong time I know this, because Sing Su informed me I chuckle as I recall the solitary instance when he used physical force to either of the children, and then on the one least worthy of his prowess tiny Sea borne A dose of castor oil was deemed expedient As we had had ample proof that illness by no means subjugated an iron will Sing Su declared himself the right and proper person to administer it Great preparations were made The crucial moment arrived I held Sea borne's struggling hands, Amah his kicking feet, while Sing Su pinched his nose—trying at the

same time to insert the table-spoon. True, he did contrive to put a goodly portion of the nectar into Sea-borne's mouth; but, despite dexterous manipulations, the indomitable babe hermetically closed his small throat. Then he proceeded to breathe out the delectable fluid all over his own face—and his father's trousers. Extremely provoking, one must admit. Sing Su eased his feelings and upheld his dignity by the further administration of a few smart slaps. Then he left Sea-borne to his mother, who nearly died, dissolved between laughter and tears.

Though inured to living in the midst of alarms, I do not mean that we were doing it daily, or even yearly, but spasmodically or periodically. Five or six years after our Riot of 1884, there was a terrible time in China caused by a powerful Secret Society called *Ko-lao-whai*. The whole country seemed living on a volcano. There were riots and uprisings in many places; but none in the City-of-the-South, the Yangtsze Valley being the centre of the storm-cloud. There two young Englishmen, Green, a Customs officer, and Argent, a missionary, were barbarously done to death. But a few years later, we also had a risky time in our own city. On this occasion the people were angry, not with us foreigners, but with their own officials, and for three reasons. First, they believed the officials were selling large quantities of rice to Formosa—which was probably true. This was against the law, seeing that the City-of-the-South needed what rice it could grow for its own use. To deplete the stores in the public granaries would leave the people short, and make food costly. The second cause was a threatened rearrangement of the sale of opium. This in future, it was said, would be sold only from one central depot, which, it was feared, would put opium out of the reach of the poor man! The third reason was a new tax, that on land. Rumour had it that the Emperor's instructions were that this tax was not to be unduly pressed where it would entail hardship on the poor. These instructions were being more honoured in the breach than the observance.

The "runners," who formed a species of unofficial policemen, on demanding the tax from a brass-worker in the Big Street dealt hardly with him, as was the manner of runners.

"If I have to pay so much, I shall have to close down my

business," he protested bitterly Very narrow is the margin of profit often in China

The runners seized his goods, threw them into the street, and marched him to the yamen In indignation and sympathy, the whole street, a mile long within the walls, closed its doors, refusing to do business This is as serious a state of affairs as when a bank in the West closes its doors

So great was the ferment that Sing Su insisted that I leave everything go over to the River's Heart, an informal refugee, and leave him and his new colleague, Mr Thanks, in the White House waiting on events In the afternoon the silent protest of closed doors turned to violent action The outraged people rose in their strength and went in a large body to the yamen or official residence There they destroyed every piece of private property belonging to the mandarins that they could lay their hands upon I was told it was sad to see the French clocks and similar foreign treasures wantonly destroyed They even burnt the sedan chairs of the officials Of course the officials fled Only one person defied the rioters, the wife of a mandarin, who himself hid in a tall hemp field not far off The brave woman barricaded herself with her boxes in her room The rioters came

'Open!" they demanded, 'or we will drag you out and behead you on the doorstep!"

"That would be an honour!" she retorted, and remained where she was

But notice that all the destructive efforts were expended on private, not government, property That was held sacred Next the crowd, exhilarated by their performances, went to the new opium depot, and ravaged that

By this time the few foreigners had arrived at the conclusion that on this occasion they were to be exempt from attack, and in the afternoon walked unmolested through the streets Sing Su and Mr Thanks saw some curious sights during the looting of the opium depot Opium was far too precious to be wasted Behold, here a man running homeward with a tiny wine cup full of it! Indeed every kind of vessel was utilized There, another man had actually taken off his shirt and with it was mopping up as much as it would absorb, and then ran home as

fast as he could, holding the dripping garment. I ventured back into the city the same evening: to learn how easily we too might have been involved.

"God has been good to us to-day," said my amah.

"Yes," I agreed: "but how exactly?"

"Well," she continued, "you don't know the dreadful things they have been saying. 'We 've involved ourselves in sore trouble, so now let us get all we can out of it,' is how they have been talking. They said that those wooden boxes which the steamer is always bringing for the foreigners are full of silver dollars. 'Let us go and seize them. What a fine haul for us!'"

But apparently the wiser heads had said:

"No, our case is bad enough without adding that to it."

And so we escaped. What a sore disappointment those boxes would have been! They contained mere household commodities from Shanghai, groceries and such like.

But our hope that the people had settled down again was rudely disillusioned. On Sunday morning, before seven o'clock, we were roused from sleep by the biggest uproar I ever heard. The officials, as a palliative, had put out a public notice that at ten that morning a store-shop of rice, six minutes' walk from us, would be opened for the sale of cheaper rice. By half-past six a host of folk from the whole city gathered at the shop, and without delay proceeded to loot the entire supply without paying a cash. Next they went to the General's yamen, a short distance in front of the White House, and there demonstrated their ire. The old General came out and exhorted, but empty words failed to allay them, and they began to attack the yamen itself. The guard of soldiers fired. They used blank shot, at which the people jeered. As they persisted, the order was given to fire ball shot, which, alas, killed outright two or three: all of them only sons, I was told.

We stood on the veranda, asking ourselves "What next?" So again I was ordered away. As I was the only foreign woman on our premises, I realized that for the two men's sakes I ought to obey. With no woman's petticoat to hamper, they could escape far more readily if it came to dropping from the lofty city wall—as had been done before.

Ah Djang, the bread-maker, hastily brought us tea and toast.



Photo by Professor Soothill

The pavilion outside the East Gate is very picturesque

We took a mouthful while packing a handbag with title deeds, toothbrush, and sleeping-clothes, and off we set for the island once more

"Do not bother to come to the boat at the North Gate I shall be all right," I said to Sing Su 'You had better stay here with Mr Thanks"

Very stubbornly he answered, "I shall see you into the boat" And very glad I was of his presence At the North Gate a curious crowd had gathered the human bats and owls had come out of their hiding places

"They are running away!" they said as we passed by

When we left the White House by our back door, there was quite a crowd there too, some of whom had been among the demonstrators at the yamen at our front One man was holding his arm, which had been shot

"Go into our yard," said Sing Su "I shall be back shortly, and will dress your wounds"

All that Sunday morning Mr Thanks and Sing Su were kept employed binding up wounds My appearance at the consulate meanwhile in time for breakfast was a surprise for they on the River's Heart knew nothing of the doings in the city Soon the rest of the community arrived some in great trepidation One European wife complained that she had not only had to dress herself but her trembling fat husband also!

Again was the River's Heart a refuge in time of danger The long day through I watched for the smoke of our burning buildings to ascend, however, in vain Monday passed so quietly that in the evening, when Sing Su appeared and reported that all was well, I announced to our consul's wife that she would have one less to care for, as I must go home It took time for the officials to regain authority, but they did it Amah told me that one of them went round in plain clothes, exhorting the principal people

"Be good children," he urged parentally, "and all will be well." This promise did not save a number of the ringleaders from having their heads cut off That Board of Punishments functioned!

CHAPTER XVII — THE BOY THAT TURNED HIS PARENTS ROUND

(1)

LIFE in South China can never be all beer and skittles, if from no other cause than weather In addition, from 1882 onwards—when our experience began—and in every period *known to living man right down to the present year, 1931,* there has been a variety of causes calculated to make life in China a Great Adventure to the foreigners who live distant from the protected areas of Shanghai, Tientsin, etc But the disturbances have one merit they save us from monotony

By far our greatest peril lay in the deadly epidemics of cholera and dysentery Both of these crept through our back door on to the White House premises, fortunately with no fatal results to any of us Almost certainly our immunity lay in the fact that, after a very severe warning to himself, Sing Su followed the worthy example set by Isaac, and " digged another well " This well was within our own walls and thus possible of being preserved from evil influences, in other words, from contamination by the terribly insanitary conditions around us

Not so in Madam Grace's compound There four Westerners died of cholera and were under the sod in less than a week consigned thereto, sadly enough, by Sing Su In spite of the long distance apart, our lives were so closely interwoven that perhaps those four need not have died but for a murderous attack made by the White Lily Society on peaceable foreigners living three hundred miles south of us Kucheng is a hill country, and these defenceless people were awaked from their slumbers before dawn by a band of fiends secretly gathered together in twos and threes from the surrounding villages Not *a word of warning was given, or a moment in which to flee* In less than an hour a British missionary, his wife, one of his children, an Irish nurse and six zenana ladies were atrociously murdered with swords, tridents, and knives Others were maimed for life, some were burnt to death in their houses A poor babe of thirteen months had its eyes violently removed, besides being hacked

When the tidings of these outrages reached the City of-the-South, there was tension and horror No wonder that our consul, the same who had worked so hard for the release of Dinger from prison, feeling his responsibilities, at once rounded up the Westerners under his jurisdiction Finding that two ladies with a baby were away at their cottage at the mouth of the Bowl River, he sent stringent orders to recall them to the presumably greater safety of the city. They had, perforce, to obey their country's representative, but unwillingly They feared the White Lily Society, or *Ko-lao whai*, less than the cholera which was then at work in the city And not, alas, without reason The lovely babe, a little bit of heaven in appearance, was the first to fall a victim I kissed it as it lay in its little coffin Then the father, arriving for its funeral also succumbed, and next a husband and wife in the prime of life died, and were buried in the same grave A number of Chinese girls in the school adjoining also passed away So many coffins passed out of that compound that the Chinese neighbours, whether regretfully or not I do not know, said

"The foreigners are all dying"

It was a time to discover the gaps in one's courage and it found them in mine When the last two were to be committed to the grave in our simple little damp God's acre outside the East Gate, my heart sank lower than ever before, and partly because Sing Su had to do duty in the infected compound, which seemed a charnel house

"Need you go inside the house itself?" I urged "Cannot you have the funeral service on the open veranda?"

"I 'll see," he said, but I had no confidence, and when he went, once more lay me down and wept If Sing Su contracted "It," then our compound would be a centre of infection, and who could tell where "It" would stop, or if a single one of us would be left to tell the tale On Sing Su's return I ventured fearfully enough, to ask

"Did you go into the house?"

"Yes!" he unrepentantly answered "How could I leave those two poor women in there alone, or ask them to come outside on to the veranda for the service?"

Thus he had to be brave for both of us Sure enough, he

thought he had taken the cholera two days later Early in the morning he came into my room

"I am shivering with cold Get me hot-water bottles, and ask for the doctor to call on his way to Madam Grace's" I heaped on him a mountain of clothes

"If I get worse," he said, "treat me with the usual remedies, if unavailing, let me die" This latter because one of the victims had begged the doctors to stop trying new methods, such as saline injections, and let him die quietly The port doctor came, smelling of brandy, which was excusable in the circumstances, and made suggestions which seemed feebleness itself in face of so terrible a foe and went on Strangely and providentially, we had more doctors at once in our little port during that hour of need than ever before or since!

In an hour Sing Su began to shiver and shake violently Whereupon we could and we did, laugh aloud in our relief We knew he had an attack of malaria, not cholera! For the first time we thanked God for malaria though it can be unpleasant enough Once when it attacked me in the night I felt so deadly cold that I dared not put my arm outside the bed clothes to pull up the rug from the foot of the bed, for if I did I feared my arm would freeze stiff

At the outbreak of cholera amongst us, our own young doctor had courageously taken up his abode at Madam Grace's, refusing to risk infecting us by returning to the house which Sing Su had built for him next to the White House When the Destroyer appeared to have stayed his hand, a serious question arose What were we to do about the remnant—the lady who had lost her all—her babe and husband the young lady her friend and the doctor himself? Danger from infection was not yet past One suggestion was that the three should go down to the cottage at the mouth of the Bowl until danger from them was gone This they were quite willing to do possibly not caring where they went But Sing Su refused to sanction it

They might all be dead before we could reach them" he objected.

Finally it was settled that the three should take up their abode in the doctor's own house in our compound, there to remain in strict quarantine till the infection was past a privacy

surely most welcome to their benumbed hearts. Well do I recall watching those two tragic women in black as, with bent heads, they walked slowly up the path from our big front gate to the doctor's house. The remembrance of them still brings grief. I often went to talk with them, through the window; and marvelled greatly at the Strength which sustained them.

(ii)

The cholera season, usually September and October, was included in our four or five months of glorious, rainless, autumn weather. Our Christmas Days were perfect, and our hard game of tennis was joy enough for most of us Sing Su began to study Chinese music, and became competent enough to lecture on it. Instead of taking the usual afternoon siesta, he would *ching*, or invite, a Chinese musician to give him lessons on his two- or three-stringed violin, and the flute. The notes would float gaily upstairs to me. One day our teacher brought in for our delectation a musician of note He sat and sang Chinese songs in a high falsetto voice, with trills that excited in us wonder and admiration. On the Westerner Chinese music has differing effects. Some long to flee from it, hands to ears; others love and cannot hear enough of it, when it consists of something more than the common beating of drums and the clashing of cymbals That song-singing soprano man and his ravishing trills moved Sing Su to his soul

(iii)

Our isolated condition led us to make lifelong friends among the Chinese and the Europeans To-day the returned Anglo-Chinese have no greater pleasure than to meet again and tell old tales of their life in out-of-the-way ports. But we all have our own ideas of our happiest ameliorations Mine were, quite naturally, watching Chinese lives ripen and fructify, often in surprising fashion.

Amah and I stepped across the road one day to the first hospital which Sing Su built, and we were met at the door of our classroom by a smiling youth of eighteen. Not a word did

he speak; but as he politely stood aside to let us pass in, his beaming face spoke plainer than words.

"I know you, if you do not know me," it said.

It is part of my programme to learn to recognize strange faces, so I felt a shortcoming creature as I murmured to myself: "Who can that be?" I felt I ought to know if I did not.

Our gathering over, I looked round, and behold, here was another countenance that defied me. It was that of a weak-eyed middle-aged woman. She was exceedingly neat and clean, but adorned with none of the powder, paint, and artificial flowers so dear to the heart of the better-class women of our city. In her hand she carried that *sine qua non* of "an inside-teaching one," a hymn-book. To avoid alarming her, I passed with but a brief word of welcome, though I had not done with her. Inquiries elsewhere brought forth the pleasantest story I had heard for some time.

The weak-eyed woman was the smiling boy's mother, whom he had that afternoon led by the hand to my weekly gathering. In the seventh moon of the previous year this boy came to the dispensary to be healed of fever and ague, our ever-present scourge. He was attracted by what he heard, and bought a copy of a small book called "The Ten Commandments," which also contained a résumé of the teaching of our Lord. The matchless love of God, as revealed by His Son, so filled Yung-ko with delight that when he returned to work at the stocking-shop, both his book and the story must needs go with him. Strange the effect which such news has on different mentalities. What had brought surprise and joy to Yung-ko roused nothing but the deepest anger in his master!

"If you believe that foreign stuff, out you go!" was his emphatic pronouncement.

On Yung-ko maintaining that there was nothing but good in all he had read and heard, the threat was summarily put into execution. Yung-ko was sent about his business. Nor did he receive more encouraging treatment at home.

"If your master does not want you, neither do I," scolded his mother.

"You cannot stop here if you have become entangled in that good-for-nothing barbarian religion," protested his stepfather.

Whether in a spirit of humility or of proud youthful independence I know not, but Yung-ko took his parents at their word and quietly departed, possessed of nothing in the world but the clothes in which he stood He knew not where to turn, but in the end found his way to the dispensary, and there told his tale, and his straits, to the gatekeeper Between them the two hit upon a plan Fortunately Yung ko was wearing one good garment when he left home This he pawned for a small sum with which he bought a knife and ten sticks of sugar cane The latter he cut into lengths and sold in the streets making just enough to feed himself each day not on beautiful rice, but on cheap dried sweet potatoes At night he shared the gatekeeper's bed and covering When Sunday came, as he did no work, neither had he to eat! But his new friends came to his aid The keeper gave him breakfast, and the amah in charge of the women's ward saw to dinner for him

Time passed but no repentant Yung ko returned home His mother grew uneasy about the boy, and went here and there seeking him After a fortnight, and as a last resort, she also found her way to the dispensary

"My son left home with no money," she said to the gatekeeper, "and I fear he has starved to death or gone for good Can you help me?"

Thus she discovered his whereabouts

"But who has fed you all this time?" she asked the boy

'Heaven!—*Then!*' he replied with all the earnestness of solemn conviction

"I don't believe it," she retorted

"Come to church next Sunday and hear for yourself, Mother' he urged She went And the boy had his reward

"Come back home and tell us more, my son,' was her verdict.

Anger and displeasure vanished like clouds before the sun In a few weeks the stepfather also was disarmed Yet even before that he had tried to save his wife's bound feet by bringing her dinner to church on Sundays to eat between services

'People told me the foreign doctrine was bad' he apologetically explained, 'but since I have heard for myself, I know better'

Yung ko did not regain his place at the stocking shop At

home, they told me, he worked like a Trojan, making mats. Next he earned something by labouring as a coolie on our enlargement scheme. On Sunday this boy who turned his parents round was a study as he sat drinking all in. Now and again a smile of appreciation would light up his otherwise plain-featured face. Compensation of no mean order! One wondered how many more similar instances there were among our friends, one helping another with no thought of reward. On several occasions it was borne in upon me that their faith and practice approximated more nearly to apostolic times than did my own.

(iv)

And compensation we needed. For a fortnight in the June of 1888, for instance, we had the most terrific heat I ever felt, either before or since. Inside the White House the thermometer registered only 104 degrees, but that was no standard wherewith to gauge our Turkish-bath atmosphere. That summer we had hoped to stay at home, although Sea-borne had again been attacked by another of his mysterious complaints of which we could make nothing. What we did know was the cause: climate. One day he had been unconscious, and so like death that I lay beside him, holding him in my arms, to give him what courage I could when the dread moment came. He had always clung so to my guiding finger that it seemed a betrayal of confidence for his mother to suffer him to find his way alone down the Valley. As we waited on Death, I could actually see the babyish figure wending its solitary way along a dim tunnel until the distance swallowed him. Could I myself have handed him straight from my arms into those of the Good Shepherd I should have felt less despairing.

But by a miracle Life, no less than Death, had hung on to his tiny coat, and won. What fanned the flickering spark into a feeble flame we never knew; certainly nothing we had done. We were at the end of our resources. Then, after an encouraging interval, came that devastating heat, with the result that our skeleton again stalked through the house, proclaiming that Sea-borne could patently not survive another long summer.

This was more depressing than any outside cataclysm could be So intense was the furnace that the mosquito net in our west bedroom smelt as if it had been scorched Doubting the evidence of my own sense I called Sing Su

"True enough,' he said

The hot wind was a veritable sirocco from Gobi At night we wandered from room to room seeking lesser degrees of misery My bed finally came to a standstill on the upstairs landing Even good old Ling fu, who never would admit there could be anything wrong with God's weather, crept into our hall and laid his gaunt frame on its smooth dark surface I took Da-ling on my knee She slid back to the floor

"It is cooler down here, Mamma,' said she

Hurriedly we packed, and this time had the relief of Sing Su's help for indeed the journey would have been too much for me alone How we reached the hills I cannot tell, but once there, our prime effort was to make little Sea borne better Those were the days of ignorance before scientific feeding We tried everything we knew goat's milk, flour boiled hard, then scraped and cooked Nothing availed, and the little one was reduced to the smallest bag of bones any one ever saw alive I thought my heart must break One day I went to hide myself in my room This, then, was to be the end of the struggle We must let him go

But I was amongst true friends There came a tap at my door, and a tender sympathizer entered, albeit childless herself Kneeling at my side, she urged that not yet must I give up hope

"We have been consulting together,' she said and have a plan whereby we believe Sea borne may yet be saved We are going to scour the hills for a good *chow chow* amah—a foster-mother If we cannot find one here, we will fetch one from Ningpo'

Like a drowning man, I caught at this last straw The search soon ended, for the very person we needed was found in the village below A pleasant respectable young Chinese mother came, pleased to play her important part in may hap saving the life of this pitiable Western child of eighteen months The result was an immediate improvement, and once more hope revived Alas the little rogue! The moment he ceased to die,

the old Adam in him reappeared He did worse than turn the cold shoulder on his benefactress He did it with violence

"I ll starve first," he said in effect

An English friend suggested her firmness with him would succeed where my weakness had failed

"Do try," I begged She did For a solid half hour, growing hotter and redder, she held this uncompromising wisp of struggling humanity in the place where he refused to be

"He has beaten me," she admitted, finally returning him to me He would not be compelled to take what was now evi dently as nauseous to him as that former dose of Sing Su s castor oil The only method left was to catch this monster of ingratitude with guile

'To night," said I to our willing Chinese friend "you shall wear my foreign sleeping clothes and take my place in bed When Sea borne awakes do not utter a word Draw him gently into your arms and perhaps in the darkness, he will think you are myself and take the life giving food he needs'

He awoke at eleven, and I listening breathlessly, heard the dear soul carefully obey instructions For a minute all went well, and then for some unaccountable reason the protesting refusal began afresh!

But the stars in their courses fought for Sea borne My room had a door, and on the other side of it was the self same English woman who had portioned out to him a share of her own babe's sustenance when he first arrived on this planet and I was ill Fortunately, in the nick of time, she had at the present moment yet another of what I called her queen's babies so fine were they On the eve of our experiment this beloved "Auntie nobly spoke

"If he still refuses, bring him to me and he shall again have a share'

So when our deception failed to deceive even an infant, I spoke to Sea borne in Chinese

'Will you have Auntie s 'nai nai'?' I asked

Emphatically he cried in the same language

"Want! Want!'—i e "Please, please!'

I took him next door, and there was simple acceptance of nature s bounty, followed by inward peace and complete satis

faction—to him and me The end was periodic visits next door, and the restoration of a measure of health to Sea borne This time he owed his life to the loving kindness, not of one but of two The English woman completed what the Chinese woman began Nor has the object of our care ever upbraided us for thus saving his life

Not that our worries over the egregious young man were over They lasted till he left the country at four and a half years, after which, physically, he never looked back Our cold season had its terrors Then he was the victim of complaints beyond Sing Su's skill, excellent quack though the exigencies of our situation had made him We were armed with a library of medical books, allopathic and homœopathic, and found the latter useful—and safe, on many a trying occasion Once, for a long while, Sea borne slept neither day nor night, but spent his puny strength tossing from one shoulder to another in my arms with the regularity of a machine Fearing brain fever, Sing Su after much search lighted on an old homœopathic book, in which was an exact description of these curious symptoms and, best of all the remedy Fortunately this we had The first dose acted like a charm When Sea borne awoke and made —oh, heavenly joy!—his almost forgotten pretty natural baby noises in the short interval before sinking again to sleep, the relief was beyond words We knew that once more it was well with the child

At another impasse we sought the help of a friend, an old American doctor, who might know better than ourselves He prescribed a quietening dose, and said "If he wakens in the night, repeat it" Sea borne awoke I took up the second prepared dose Then something stayed my hand 'No' I thought, "if he will go off to sleep again without it, he shall And he did

All next day Sea borne lay on my lap in a semi-comatose condition, with upturned eyes and white immobile face At five in the afternoon without a word to me Sing Su rushed off to our friend

How many drops did you say we might give? 'he asked

"Let me see' he ruminated how many did I say? Is anything the matter?

tution Thus the system has advantages, both for prevention and recovery We know the terror that existed in our own land long ago of being "cursed with bell, book, and candle" Against this I can pit the fear engendered by a vituperating, cursing Chinese woman As the work of a distorted imagination, her achievement was inimitable

(11)

Living also in the passage that connected our back door with the busy street was another little old woman and her grown up sons A low door in the far corner was their only opening into the passage Indeed I remained unconscious of their existence until the evil report of one of the young men was brought to me

"Aloa is a thief, and the torment of the rest of the family," proclaimed Amah "The other sons are steady and hard working But he is lazy, refuses to work, gambles, and smokes opium"

In fact, he ran the whole gamut of Chinese vices which do not differ greatly from our own

For years Aloa's mother had shielded him as many a Western mother has done She surreptitiously yielded to the money extortions wherewith he gratified his evil tastes At length, however, even her patience gave out, and she found it impossible to meet his increasing demands Failing her, he began to prey on the household goods, which the family shared in common Twice he perpetrated the enormity of stealing the family rice-pan, without which they could not cook a meal Next his old mother's wadded bed quilt disappeared Once, when passing out, I saw a big hole in their wall, which bore witness to his attempt during the night to break through and steal

Endless bickerings were, naturally, the outcome of these depredations These by no means conduced to the peace of the neighbourhood, nor the comfort of the foreign woman living so near them At last the sorely tried mother was reduced to the drastic measure of "cursing" her incorrigible son She went outside, and there of set purpose rent the heavens She called down upon him the most awful penalties

which the unregenerate heart can conceive The pains of Western excommunication were light as thistledown compared with the anathemas which that aggrieved dame hurled in public at her quondam well beloved son Sad to say, these failed to *frighten or reform the depraved Aloa*

" I will burn the house down about your ears," he menaced He went so far as to warn our old schoolmaster, Mr Yang, whose house was across the narrow passage, that if he valued his life he had better speedily remove elsewhere !

It was as a threat to our own safety that Aloa was brought to my notice *If* he put his ideas into execution, which seemed possible, *then the White House would be in danger* Though personally unknown, Aloa became somewhat of a nightmare to me, especially as Sing Su's distant country engagements necessitated my being half the time alone, night and day The climax came I had heard loud quarrelling all morning, and in the afternoon Amah came into the dining room

" Aloa is getting his deserts at last," she said with repressed excitement

" How ? " I queried

" Oh ! His mother has insisted on his taking opium, and he will soon be dead "

' Where ? " I asked

' In their own house, where he is fastened up," was her reply

Probably I looked as I felt—incredulous , for presently she ventured

" You might like to go and see for yourself "

I had no taste for horrors, and this suggestion did not at all appeal to me Also I was slow to believe that any mother would dare to arrogate to herself such power of life or death over her son, even in China where parental authority is writ large over the lintel So I tried to persuade myself that my *best policy was to ignore the whole matter I sat still, and* went on with my sewing

Yet my thoughts persisted in wandering to our back door I began to wish Sing Su were at home to do something Next, the idea forced itself could I thus lightly rid myself of responsibility for the unnatural deed, seeing that I was on the spot and Sing Su was not ? A sudden impulse found me outside the back

Sing Su explained, and the two returned together. The prescriber made no comment, but offered to remain the night, "if it would be any relief to us." There was, however, nothing to be done, save wait—and pray.

Sea-borne's cast-iron constitution survived even an overdose of narcotic; but had my outstretched hand not been withdrawn, that second dose must have proved fatal.

Such are a few of the exigencies of foreign service. Yet I speak of them without fear. Difficulties never deter the dauntless.

CHAPTER XVIII THE PASSAGE WITH THE DOUBLE TURN

(1)

IN the entry, or passage with the double turn that led to our back door, lived several families whose doors, but not windows, opened on to it One summer I used to listen, almost as a matter of course, to a woman out there At midday she raised her shrill penetrating voice, and for half an hour declaimed to high heaven and the wide world certain information which she was determined they should have

"What does she do it for?" I inquired of Amah, thinking it might be some special form of worship

"She is cursing the thief who has stolen something from her, and she has a picture of him on a board, into which she drives a nail every day," was the reply

Once curiosity led me out into the street that way Sure enough, though the old lady had finished her maledictions and retired behind her closed door, there, on the wall nearest the street, and for all who passed by to see, hung the board with its rude drawing of the human frame Into the different parts of it she had driven many nails into the right hand to-day, the left to-morrow, and so on with feet, eyes, ears, following with the various organs, especially the heart

Daily, for I know not how long, she continued to curse the delinquent in every possible particular from his cradle to his grave, from his rising up to his lying down, in his basket and store. Every imaginable, and from our standpoint unimaginable, misery of mind, body, and estate she called down, not only upon himself but on all his ancestors and descendants world without end Whether her daily effort was merely an outlet for her spleen or as an aid to the restoration of the stolen articles, I do not know Perhaps both, for there were cases, I was told, when this procedure had been effective in restoring the articles Believing, as so many do, that this and similar methods are powerful magic even a thief may have an expectation that the nails will somehow find their way into his hand or foot or other parts of his body, unless he make resti-

door of our house There I caught the Bread maker as he was hurrying out, evidently greatly perturbed

"I will go with you," was all that passed between us

In a moment we were both standing in front of the low door in the entry corner At that instant the door opened and a well dressed man passed out

"Let him die!" he casually remarked as he went about his business "It is the best thing that could happen to the useless good for-nothing"

We were not to have it all our own way Inside the still open door stood the old mother herself, determination to suffer no intruders expressed in her every line With arms outstretched she barred our way

"You cannot come in, you shall not come in," she reiterated

Encouraged by having me at his elbow, the Bread-maker forthwith poured out the biggest torrent of entreaties, reproaches, threats and even promises of reward that I ever listened to in my life Without the slightest effect She stood there, obdurate and impassive as a stone When she saw we had no intention of retiring but were trying to edge ourselves inch by inch along her lobby, her anger was so great that she looked as if she would take me by the shoulders and force me out Fearing to do this, the sorely harassed soul did better She went down on to her knees

"Leave us to ourselves," she pleaded with uplifted hands, "and go away to your own business"

Realizing that the entreaties were unavailing, she rose from her knees, and with a despairing look turned away We passed into the front room. It was empty, but it led to another, which we entered There the most gruesome sight met our eyes The room was of the ordinary rough and ready type, dark, with unplastered walls, low roof, and earthen floor. Near the centre was a wooden pillar, and to it was fastened the ne'er do-weel, in the throes of death, as far as we could judge His feet rested on the floor, but were bound to the pillar by strong cord Another rope, passed round his arms and shoulders, held him fast to the pillar He was unconscious, and only an occasional convulsive movement showed that the lamp of life still flickered

It was dreadful He had evidently been bound fast before the opium had been given for the dregs had dribbled from his mouth and the dark stains discoloured his face He could not have been more than twenty years of age and the spectacle he made as he hung there dying was too horrifying for words We gazed in awed silence

He will soon be finished remarked the only other occupant of the room The rest of the family save the mother had apparently fled the house

How much has he taken? I asked

A hundred cash worth This was enough to kill more than one person

Can nothing be done? I asked

It is too late now was the response

Without another word I rushed from the house and the next moment found me bursting in upon our newly arrived young doctor He was sitting quietly in his study

Doctor! I cried *Do you know what they are doing?* Killing a man at our very doors! Surely we must not stand by and see that?

A few words of explanation sufficed and I soon conducted the doctor to the scene where I was only too glad to leave him alone with the culprit—or victim of this summary justice It seemed a hopeless case but in spite of further protests the doctor cut the man down gave him a powerful hypodermic insisted on keeping him moving incessantly and in time had the satisfaction of pronouncing his life saved

Meanwhile I was learning what particular circumstances had led to such a desperate *dénouement* It was the proverbial last straw The young man had stolen the garments of a neighbour and the quarrelling I had heard earlier in the day was caused by the injured party making known the grievance and demanding restitution This was an additional disgrace to the already humiliated family The wretched culprit had disappeared but two of his brothers went in search of him And as if to exasperate them beyond endurance he was discovered sitting unconcerned amongst the crowd at a play in a neighbouring temple!

The sight of him laughing and enjoying himself there whilst

they were smarting under the shame he had brought upon them added fuel to the fire of righteous anger They waited till the play was over Then, with the aid of a friend, they seized and dragged him home Here a sort of family court-martial was held, at which they decided no longer to permit him to make their lives a burden In the end the unfortunate mother agreed to assert the prerogative, according to Chinese law, of life or death over her son A choice was given him Either he would be sent to the yamen and given over to the mercies of the relentless officials, or he must take opium and die He chose, possibly, the lesser evil which was to take opium He was bound fast the opium sent for, and then the mother with her own hands held the fatal draught to his lips, and he swallowed it

If Aloa had been a terror to me before, he became doubly so afterwards I feared he must know of the share I had had in his escape, and the idea of meeting and perhaps being thanked by him was painful So for a long time I avoided the convenience of the back door as if I had been the sinner Christians talked with and exhorted Aloa and he consented to go to our opium refuge and there try to break off his opium habit I wish I could end my true tale by adding that Aloa became the pride and joy of his mother, but this was never the case While in the opium refuge articles belonging to other inmates were stolen, and though his guilt was not proven, Aloa was strongly suspected of being the thief

Later our soft hearted Bread maker helped to pay his passage to that resort of the impenitent—Shanghai There by hard work he earned a good wage, a large share of which, alack went down the pipe to which he had returned A year after, I was told he had died of cholera in Shanghai Of this his mother was kept in ignorance by request of the other sons, and when I asked why was told

Oh! She loves him so, they dare not tell her'

When acquaintances returned from Shanghai, she immediately questioned them as to her son, and they were ready with an answer

"He is well and prospering"

Then why does he not write to me?"

"Oh, his opium takes his spare time and money"

Apparently mother love is as paradoxical in China as Europe In that we are like-minded

(III)

By far the most engaging and least perturbing of our neighbours in that passage with the double turn was our old pedagogue, Mr Yang, and his small household The joy of Mr and Mrs Yang's heart was their orphan grand daughter, Ngachiae, or Quiet Fairy, aged nine Mr Yang was Sing Su's first, but by no means last, teacher Time and experience are required when the "foreigner" desires a past master in Chinese, one capable of guiding him along the thorny path of the sacred Classics In Mr Yang's day, as neither understood the other's language, a hiatus would frequently occur Mr Yang could neither explain, nor Sing Su understand, the meaning of a particular term What was to be done in such an impasse? Mr Yang knew He gaily suited the action to the word He would lie down on the floor, stiff as a board he was 'dead" He would roll himself over and over he was "rotatory" If motion were required, he would do his old best to hop skip, and jump

Mr Yang was too simple minded to harbour any superior notions in his relations with the foreigners But he could and he did effectively dominate the young urchins into whom later, he strove to instil the rudiments of Chinese learning in the room inside our back door That was after he was superseded as Sing Su's teacher Though small of stature, he put the fear of man into the boys in a way that amused us, by the vehemence with which he smote the table while wearing the huge horn-rimmed spectacles so dear to the Chinese scholar The day came when his feeble strength failed even in this, and he had gently to be put on the shelf

Then Mrs Yang old, but less old than he took the helm and carried on the work admirably A dignified, highly self-respecting person she, always neatly and suitably attired, with a reputation for excessive cleanliness

"She is so particular," said her neighbours, "she actually

washes her rice-bowls twice! Once after the last meal, and again before the next"

If you could have seen her kitchen! No chimney, and the rafters encrusted with smoke; small wonder particles of dust would fall upon the basins

Dressed in her very best, Mrs Yang came into the study one day to interview us in state She started off by congratulating herself, and tacitly Sing Su too

"I, you know," she exclaimed, with a proud note, "attended the Zing-si church when the congregation consisted of 'straw-sandals'—that is, poor folk Nowadays, 'shoes and long gowns'—respectable people—are more the order of the day!"

This was introductory, the preliminary to a piece of serious and delicate business Mrs Yang had courageously undertaken to conduct it herself rather than relegate it to the "middle" man or woman, as is the universal custom in the City of the South Probably the desire to keep secret from her neighbours so revolutionary a procedure as she contemplated also weighed with her

"Mr Yang and I are now old," she went on, "and it is high time Quiet Fairy's future husband was chosen" She paused "You know," she soon continued, "the great respectability of the Yang family, the care with which Quiet Fairy has been nurtured, the ceaseless vigilance we have exerted to keep her from contamination with the vulgar world She is an unstained lily, and a fragrant rose" She paused again "What better course, then, could be adopted, and what more excellent arrangement made, than that Quiet Fairy be forthwith betrothed to your son Sea borne? Despite the difference in age, he being under four, such an alliance would be admirable in every way, the future well-being of the young people assured, and the elders need suffer no further anxiety on their behalf"

Such was the problem which unexpectedly blew in from the passage entry that morning in the person of good Mrs Yang How to tackle it passed the wit of one woman I incontinently fled and left the study to Sing Su and our visitor

"We thank you very much indeed Mrs Yang," said he (so he reported later) 'for your most gracious proposal Quiet Fairy is indeed the gem you say, and more She is charming

shortly became engaged objected, and desired her to follow another Old Custom, that of the pernicious foot-binding. Quiet Fairy suffered in consequence. It is only fair to add that her crippled feet did not prevent her from becoming the mother of six daughters after she had married the obdurate young man! He, I am bound to confess, was at the time our doctor's capable assistant and ought to have known better. Yet even he, in the end, had to yield to a New Custom—for it had become the fashion.

When I visited the City-of-the-South twenty years later, I found that in not one of his numerous daughters had been perpetuated the two and a half inch "golden lilies" of Quiet Fairy. For which Heaven—and possibly a few foreigners—be thanked!

CHAPTER NIX VARIOUS PRECIOUS METALS

(i)

MANY of our early Chinese friends and acquaintances had so much time on their hands that they were prodigal of it, and lavished much on our little family at the White House. Hence arose the need, not for one, but for two studies One was upstairs, sacred to the lore of the Classics and Chinese Literature generally. The other, downstairs, was devoted to the study of Chinese human nature. To me, I confess, the latter was by far the more absorbing, and much easier to fathom.

The downstairs study was placed conveniently near our secluded back door, which led out through the twisting passage, over the narrow filthy canal, and on to the cobbled street. To it came all sorts and conditions of Chinese men—and women too. Sing Su and I were born of progenitors who loved their fellow-men Hence we liked to feel it possible for our visitors to gain something of value in their contact with us. But here, in the study, we soon realized that we also had something to learn, and that wisdom had neither been originated nor cornered by us. Whether we liked it or not, we had to put on our Chinese spectacles, to see life as they saw it—to the extent of our human fallibility.

A frequent visitor to our downstairs study was the stone-mason, *a man for whom we had a great respect Not because of his eloquence. He rarely opened his mouth save to expound Holy Writ, as he understood it Not for his beauty, for his eyes were not set straight, and he was short*

One day he came in at a critical moment, and sat waiting, while Sing Su hauled over the coals a fellow-countryman of the mason's who had not risen to Sing Su's standard in some monetary transactions When the crestfallen delinquent had departed, came the mason's turn He proceeded to tell Sing Su that he was now the owner of a house which he wished to offer as a dwelling for some poor brother in the faith He likewise wanted Sing Su to hold the deeds of this property, and

to preserve them from the acquisitive fingers of an unscrupulous son Sing Su was delighted with so generous an action

" But are you quite sure you can afford it ? " Sing Su cooed, knowing him not to be wealthy

When the preliminaries were settled, Sing Su asked :

" *And who would you like to be the first occupant of your* house, Ah Yao ? "

" The man you have just been talking to," was the ready, if startling, reply.

He then went on to tell of the difficult circumstances in which this particular sinner laboured, and the many excellent reasons there had been for his faulty administration of money committed to him Sing Su sat silent, if unconvinced But here was a man whose chief thought was, not how just should he be, but how kind Which attitude, I ask, was the more God-like ?

Will the Eastern and Western nations ever arrive at an equal standard for life and conduct ? Answer who can

One day in my nursery three-year-old Sea borne said, " Amah, is Mamma going out this afternoon ? "

She promptly replied, " No, she is not "

He thoughtfully but silently accepted the statement I was pained at *my very heart ! It seemed such an unnecessary* bare faced lie, and " so bad for the children " I felt obliged to tackle her about it When we were alone, I began as best I knew how

" Amah, whatever made you tell Sea borne I was not going out ? " I asked " You knew very well I was ! We foreigners would say that was not speaking the truth," I added gently

" Oh ! " she retorted unrepentantly " I was but deceiving him a little ! " She might have added, " For his own good to save him a heartache " Which was the only kind and proper spirit to have

Here was Amah's standpoint to avoid giving pain There was mine truth, and presumably at all costs Can the twain be reconciled ? As if wantonly to confuse the issue still further Amah asked leave soon after to go over to the River's Heart to collect some money she had ' lent out " to people there

"I 'm not at all sure I shall get it," she grumbled, "though they promised to have it ready for me to day"

Then she didactically added, "That 's the difference between you and us If an Englishman promises to do something he does it We don't."

Would that this witness were true!

Only on one occasion did my trusty amah make it clear that she regarded me with suspicion, if not disapproval Sing Su was away in the all engulfing "country," digging foundations I was alone When her nightly duties to the two infants were done, Amah was free to betake herself to her room in the yard One evening, the bustle of the day being over, for some reason, letter writing probably, I did an unusual thing I shut myself in the downstairs study, and remained there, busy, absorbed, silent, till close on midnight Next morning, with set face and coldly aggressive manner, Amah thus addressed me

"Mistress, did you go to Madam Grace's house last night?"

"No, I didn t," I replied Then roused by the dead silence that followed, I added, "Why do you ask?"

'Well" she countered brusquely, "I sought you all over, and you were nowhere to be found

I was in the second study the whole time, and you certainly did not look there,' I retorted I added, "I heard you go upstairs' Indeed not even a deaf mute could have failed to hear her footfalls heavy as an elephant's as she thump-thumped on each step one of the results of lack of spring caused by foot binding

Nothing more passed but I was left wondering what mischief she imagined I had been doing Had I been roaming secretly through the dreary streets perpetrating some evil design in the darkness? And how was one with the best will in the world always to avoid giving offence? I convinced or no Amah had to be satisfied

You English speak the truth she had said Let her now accept my bare word

Some two or three years later on the sad eve of leaving Darjeeling and Sen borne behind in England for six long years I gathered them to me With I fear oppressive solemnity I told them that during our absence there was just one thing they

must never fail to do "You must always speak the truth," I urged upon them "Even if you have done wrong and know you will be punished, still you must speak the truth"

Impressed doubtless by my manner, the poor infants wept in chorus, wondering, probably, if they could have expressed themselves, why such a to do about a seeming nothing I hope I also told them there really was nothing to cry about

But there was the Truth, the sacred, inviolable Truth we pride ourselves so much upon speaking, which must be maintained at all costs however icy-cold and petrifying it may be to the recipient—or victim "What a cruel parent!" ejaculates some tender hearted, child loving Chinese mother

(11)

As it happened, I loved and appreciated our Chinese women were they of high or low degree They deserved it, although they live in a land where the generic She is said to be "born with a weak nature, like a mouse' and where 'a woman must not use her own judgment, but must render reverential obedience to man" With a powerful Dowager Empress—Old Buddha—on the very throne of China, could any dictum have been more hopelessly out of date even so far back as 1887?

One Saturday evening, through our back door, and into the study, came a quaint personage a Chinese woman of fifty, and old at that But most Chinese women are content to count themselves old at that age Her dress was countrified, of the simplest description, made of blue, coarse homespun cotton, and probably woven dyed and stitched by her own toil worn fingers Yet it was clean and tidy withal Her feet were large only when compared with the more compressed tiny "golden lilies" of her city sisters Her weather-beaten yellow face was devoid of beauty, and none remained save that which shines from the lamp lit within

She hailed from a village hidden out of sight among the hills twenty miles off called Rushing Water Ravine Her husband was dead, she was childless, and so had little for which to live Her errand to our City of the-South was to consummate the most daring act of her monotonous existence, beside which

any so-called brave deeds of mine are not worth mentioning She had the temerity to desire publicly to ally herself to the faith of the despised *fa-nang*—the Foreigner And oh, the scorn and derision that could be put into the *fa* !

Of course she was questioned as to her reasons for such a wish, and also as to the hope that was within her Equally of course she explained

" I am stupid in the extreme "

She expected that excuse to cover a multitude of shortcomings and ignorances

As a matter of fact, the simplest question on the Attributes of God reduced her to chaos, and the Divinity of Christ completely routed her Was she then as *bang ge*—stupid—as she said ?* That were a short sighted conclusion She was only nonplussed under such a terror-inspiring ordeal Wily Sing Su, though born only the day before yesterday compared with her, had already learned that sometimes one must dig for gold

" Just sit on one side here, and wait, will you ? " he asked quietly

When the study was almost empty, he began a conversation

" Have you ever told anybody about your belief ? " he inquired

" Yes, to be sure,' was the quick response " *I did to-day, coming in the boat Indeed, I 'm all of a shake yet with the fright I had* The boat was too full of people, and the water came in, nearly upsetting us Everybody was dreadfully frightened, and I cried out at the top of my voice, ' Lord save us ! Lord, save us ! ' And a woman sitting beside me said afterwards, ' It certainly was your Saviour that saved us to-day ' '

" And if the boat had foundered, where would you have gone ? " asked the inquisitor. Again she was confounded, whereupon Sing Su relented

" Never mind," he said " I might have been frightened myself in such circumstances '

He then inquired if she ever cursed now, or acted in similar incompatible ways

Oh no ! ' In chimed a bystander with information how nobly she had borne galling abuse , how her house had been broken up and her life made a burden because of her steadfast

refusal to give up her profession of faith in a despised foreign man called Yi su

Seeing that she was truly a living epistle, and as there appeared no just cause why her desire should be refused, she received the assurance that next day she too would be acknowledged as an "inside-teaching-one" When the questioning was safely over, she came nearer to Sing Su, and with a profound bow held out to him a packet

"I have a small present for you," she said

"Oh, no," said he, putting it away with his hand, "I do not wish any present"

"But you must take it One ought to do it It is the right thing," persisted she Reluctantly he yielded She put a little heavy parcel into his hand, and Sing Su, rather than disappoint her, ceremoniously took it, as if it were gold He had not the faintest idea what it contained

Late in the evening, when we were alone, Sing Su handed the packet to me With curious but reverent fingers I opened it On the outside was a wrapper of red paper, on which was written in Chinese characters "Lord of Heaven and earth, Heavenly Father, Our Father" Then followed the names of the two foreigners, Sing Su and Sing He, and the doctor's, after which came these words "Grace upon grace, blessing upon blessing, be upon our thirty-two churches"

It ended thus

"This humble woman, who lives at Rushing Water Ravine, now joins the Church of Christ, and follows the doctrine of the three gentlemen whom she takes as her teachers"

Inside the thin red paper was a coarse yellow one, neatly folded, and containing a red string of one hundred cash, or copper coins, the total value being about fourpence halfpenny in our money Each cash had been burnished bright! Never had I seen our dirty cash shine so brilliantly

Nor was that all Neatly folded in another bit of paper lay—a solid silver dollar

This inner little packet had been tied with a thread of red cotton to which a needle was attached and stuck into the paper Red is the Chinese colour for Happiness, and the name for Needle is exactly the same sound as for True Thus Needle

and Thread were used by her as emblems of the Truth to which she had stitched her Faith and abiding Happiness Small wonder that we often accepted a Chinese woman's estimate of herself with a large grain of salt *Bang-ge*—stupid, indeed!

Though never, from our Western standard, having had a chance in life, this "extremely stupid" woman could yet live valiantly, act uprightly, and symbolize in the beautiful way I have thus described She was poor living probably on sweet potatoes for most of the year For her a Mexican silver dollar, about two shillings in our money, was a small fortune Was she not a worthy successor of an earlier widow who cast two farthings into the Treasury? One Who knew said they were all her living

(iii)

On one of Chang's or Mr Gold's, early visits to the village of Under-the Bridge, among his many listeners he had a lady. Her husband was a Bachelor of Arts, and a man of parts, but his life and patrimony, as everybody knew, had been devastated by opium Mrs Ting was a tall gentlewoman of fine spirit, and she was deeply affected by what she heard

'*How lovely! Oh that my husband would accept what you say!*" she exclaimed, with tears

Some one ventured to suggest that perhaps the speediest way of convincing him was *for her to accept it first* Which she did A few months later, Sing Su was informed that a person outside wished to speak with him

"Show him into the study," came the usual formula

When he joined his guest he was aghast at the object which stood before him, a thing hardly worth calling a man A mere skeleton, ill clad, on whose face the deathly pallor proclaimed the confirmed opium addict and so dirty withal that Sing Su hesitated before begging him to be seated

"I am Ting of Under the Bridge this wreck of humanity replied, on being asked his honourable name At first Sing Su could scarcely credit it Though he knew that Mr Ting was an opium smoker he little expected to find a man of his family and standing fallen so low

As the two sat and talked little dreaming how close a connection would afterwards be forged between them, Ting told the story of his life He was a studious youth, and after taking his B A degree became a schoolmaster in his own village of Under the-Bridge For some reason, possibly because of the difficulty of making a living in so poorly paid a profession, he left it and became a geomancer A far more intriguing occupation this than that of hearing sundry small boys 'back their books' —that is recite their memorized lessons with their backs turned to their master, and so preclude all cheating, as was the Chinese custom

Geomancy, a pseudo science of the phenomena of nature is believed to affect closely the lives of the people, their health and prosperity, also those of their children, and even of their animals A Chinese will not build a house or temple, nor will he dig a well without first employing a geomancer to find out whether the proposed site will interfere with the spirits who are believed to be in charge of each locality The contour of the land must be carefully observed to decide whether any hill or mound, or stream of water or rather the spiritual force beneath these outward semblances, will have any inimical influence Still more important is it to discover a required site where the positively good influences will act, and be directly beneficial

It is eminently desirable to have the new house or building face the right way, in order that all the best influences come to the front of it, and all the bad or doubtful go towards the back which can more easily be protected against them by a high blank wall Especially is this position important in selecting a site for a grave If, for instance parents are buried where disturbing influences flow into them these will be reflected in the unhappy condition of their survivors There will be bad health, want of success in business inferior harvests in fact everything relating to mundane existence To such an extent is this cult practised that, if a family suffers grievously in any way, another geomancer may be called in (*Geo* means "land," and *mancy* 'divination') He will possibly discover that a forebear's grave lies in a direct line with the evil influences, and it is these which have caused the distresses Thus necessity

is laid upon the descendants to find a site where the bad influences will be deflected and their place taken by the good The coffins are at times taken up and reburied elsewhere in the hope that the spirits will now be appeased and the ills cease

The tyranny of the dead hand was once tiresome to us at the White House Some very close neighbours kept a number of pigs The awful effluvia of them and of their sour grain food which was obtained from a brewery near by, came over the wall It would send us flying to the other side of the house till the wind changed and reduced us to wishing we had never been born Never in all this world did anything smell so vilely So poisonous was the odour that unless something could be done, we might even be compelled to pull up the stakes of our beloved White House and leave Our site had indeed been badly chosen However, by paying handsomely, we arranged through a middle man for the pigs' removal to some distant spot On inquiring why this took so long a time we were told that the geomancer had already been at work for a fortnight doing his best to find a lucky day on which our porcine neighbours might safely be escorted to their new estate

This roving geomancing commission led Mr Ting far and wide, into all classes of society Alas it also led to his undoing he began to smoke opium In course of time he sold everything on which he could lay his hands all except his wife "went down his pipe, as they say Plot after plot of inherited land took the same disastrous journey Step by step he sank deeper into the mire He even sold his clothes to buy his dose In addition he was in debt to any one who would lend No wonder the unfortunate Mrs Ting cried

"Oh that my husband would believe what you say!"

Happily, before his brain became too bemused Mr. Ting came under more vitalizing influences than those of the spirits of the wind and water He was still able to realize the depths he had plumbed, and knew nothing could be done with an opium smoker—till he ceased to be one So presently, into this conversation with Sing Su in the study he plunged the question

'Will you cure me of my opium smoking?"

It was in the early days, and Sing Su was startled

"I have never yet tried to cure any one," he replied, 'and am not anxious to experiment, or to take the responsibility"

"I beg you to take me I cannot go on living like this Try me! I am sure it will be all right," urged Ting

A stone might have resisted his despairing entreaties Not so pitying Sing Su, who finally undertook to provide the medicine—quinine mostly, and good food Mr Ting promised to relieve him of the odium if serious sickness supervened The patient stayed on our premises for three difficult weeks, enduring misery and torture The end found him a conqueror, a free man

There is always the fear, at least for a time, in the cutting off of opium, of a return to the drug This never happened with Ting, and to the end of his days he religiously abstained

Geomancy was now also beside the mark and he had perforce to shoulder the burdens which he had made for his own back with their heavy disabilities Fortunately at that time we needed a teacher for our small boys' school Mr Ting accepted the post, though we knew his abilities went far beyond it Everybody in China also knows that at the end of the year, positively before New Year's Day dawns, you must settle your accounts and pay your debts or your particular heaven will fall and bury you under the debris For a few years the end of each year was a terrible ordeal for Mr Ting driving him to distraction His old creditors came clustering round and stung like wasps, dunning him mercilessly, the more so because he was now known to be in steady foreign employ But, simply, he had not the money to pay

One New Year's Eve Sing Su was told of his pitiable condition, but his informant received no encouraging response save words of sympathy We could not, if we would, pretend to begin to pay sinners' debts for them True But what was to be done? What happened was that under cover of night a muffled up foreign woman sped along the empty streets to where Ting lived She asked for him, and when he appeared, with but few words put into his trembling hands a small roll of hard silver Mexican dollars, just a sufficiency to make the wheels of his old world turn round a little less painfully Then the



Photo by Professor Soothill

Th y s f Mr and Mrs Y u s heart was thar orph in gr w ld-da ghter Quet Fairy

messenger of goodwill went scurrying back whence she came, no one a penny the wiser—save Ting

In those early formative years Sing Su pinned his faith on the sincere but unsophisticated countryfolk, who were much despised for their small learning by such scholars as Ting the Geomancer. Hence his constant disappearances from the White House Realizing that he could reap nothing where none had sown, he more or less cheerfully, half his time, left the comforts of home, and his wife and children, and lived away up among the countryfolk—if living it could be called, where not one ounce of comfort, in our ordinary acceptance of the term, was to be had, either for love or money

A servant carried his three-tier provision basket slung at one end of a carrying-pole, and his bundle of bedding at the other end This made him independent, save for such trifles as a roof to cover him at night, or a fire wherewith his man could cook rice and make tea Of course the White House did all it could, but prepared food would not keep more than a week, and usually he was away ten days, a fortnight, even three weeks on end Two articles of food went, and returned, with clock-like regularity a tin of Oxford sausages and a tin of sardines —iron rations, to be opened only when local produce failed Sometimes we tried to calculate how many thousands of miles these two small identical tins, representatives of England and France, had travelled!

Once I expected him back on Friday evening so at six o'clock Arabi, the dog, and I set off to walk along the bank of the river hoping to espy his boat coming down stream There had been heavy rain, and as I went along the bank, close under the outside of the city walls, I did not like the look of the water The wide river was a terrible current, sweeping down with frightening irresistible force, and with hardly a craft on its broad bosom Darkness compelled me to return home Sing Su appeared neither that night nor all Saturday, and I began to be alarmed It would be the easiest thing in the world for his small boat to be swamped by that mighty flood and no one to know it I knew he would have come if he could, for there was only himself to take command at the church on the Sunday

When Sunday morning dawned, it was beyond me to sit still

any longer I insisted that some one must start in search Nobody wanted to walk the necessary fifteen miles up to Under-the-Bridge No boat could make an inch of headway against the cruel downpouring Yet only by going there could we learn if he had even reached Under the-Bridge, where he must take boat for the city

"Sing Su has only been delayed by the floods You must 'relax your heart, the Chinese tried to reassure me

That was precisely what it was now out of my power to do I could not help picturing my sad fate if he were for ever lost and I left alone with two tiny children Early on Sunday morning the faithful Z-loa obeyed my insistent commands, and set off to seek some sort of news With a heavy heart I went to church wondering if without a preacher there could be a service at all But though Sing Su was not at the Zing si Mr Ting was and him the people with one accord invited to fill the gap He preached for the first but not the last time by a long way

In those days there was no such thing as public speaking or lecturing among the Chinese It was an unknown or a lost art But here was Mr Ting to the manner born! He at once sprang into repute as a noted and polished speaker surpassing any other Chinese who had yet been heard in the City of the South Sometimes we styled him our Dr Joseph Parker being of similar prophetic style, and always he could command an attentive eager audience He would stand before our seven or eight hundred people of the congregation—for the little one had become a thousand! Often he spoke with eyes closed, a remarkable figure Eloquently and forcefully he enunciated great truths Gone for ever was the worn-out opium smoker's look In its stead appeared the Chinese gentleman with a strong, yet gentle face that no longer repulsed by its sickly pallor

After that service I returned home And it was not long before the object of my deep concern walked in Never before had I seen him look so bedraggled His white suit was well-nigh a black one, his hair was dishevelled, his face was red and weather-beaten His *tout ensemble* suggested that of a foot-baller after a scrimmage He had had an adventurous journey

before reaching even Under the-Bridge He had been away through the valleys, and up over the mountains of West Stream, where he was marooned by the fierce downpour in a large village, fifteen hundred feet high There he remained weather-bound until Saturday morning, when, the rain ceasing to come down " in strings," he set off down the narrow mountain path that led to Hill Root, a village where dwelt a company of Christians Here he found that the West Stream, over which he must cross, had now become a roaring impassable torrent Drenched to the skin, he was lucky in finding his bedding fairly dry, so, casting off his wet garments, he put on his pyjamas, in which he took evening prayers, also an early service next morning

" We never before saw you so elegantly dressed ! " the people remarked in all seriousness

By noon next day the flood had somewhat subsided, and the King's business required haste With the willing aid of half a dozen strong men, he was carried in his light mountain chair almost dry over the stream This was made possible by the six men who accompanied him across wading in water up to their waists, and holding with might and main to the chair-poles, three on each side Without these men the two ordinary bearers, one in front and one behind would have been swept off their feet, the occupant upset, and all three carried away by the torrent and possibly drowned Once across, the rest was plain sailing At Under the-Bridge Sing Su found a boat which bore him the fifteen miles to the city in record time, almost as swiftly as a stone shot from a catapult, so rapid was the flooding river

Seven and a half years in the heat and humidity of South China claimed their toll of me In the spring of 1892 I took Darling and Sea borne to England where they were to be left Sing Su, loth to leave his newly arrived English colleague without a modicum of help and companionship stayed behind till the late autumn, when he followed us home As his steamer left the City-of the South on the Sunday morning an early service was called at which Sing Su was to bid farewell to his many dearly beloved Chinese friends

It was then that Mr Ting completely forgot himself In a voice broken by sobs he commended his foreign friend to the

care of their great mutual Father on the long journey across the seas Weeping bitterly over his and their many shortcomings, he besought God to help them to live better lives more after the pattern of the one which, so he said, had been lived among them Before he had finished his prayer, the whole congregation was in tears, and many were sobbing Thus they parted, for a time

Some years ago now, Mr Ting passed to where " beyond these voices there is peace " It would therefore be the more gratifying to leave him in the frame of mind in which he has just been depicted But that is not a complete picture, and far from the whole truth ! *Blunt Oliver Cromwell insisted on having* his wart painted into his portrait, and set an example for all time And Mr Ting had more warts than one Some were so very prominent they threatened to obliterate other features Whether his failings were inherent or born of his former opium habit I wot not perhaps a mixture of both He could be, and often was, arrogant almost beyond human endurance Easily offended himself, his own sharp sayings often hurt others A good chair bearer coming out of Ting s house at Under the-Bridge was heard muttering to himself

" Again angry , again angry ! " he said

More than once, because he could not have his own way, he furiously resigned his post The last time he did so the resignation was regretfully accepted—for a period His scornful haughtiness often made him difficult, alike to native and foreigner We have to remember the school in which he had been trained, that of the scholar, the proudest in China And perhaps, at heart, his failings rather endeared him to the human frailty of those of us who were not called upon to suffer too keenly from them !

A photograph of Mr Ting lies beside me which years later, he bestowed upon his favourite, Darling Though taken thirty years ago the crude craftsman did not succeed in obliterating the shrewd old face softened with years that looks out at me, and on which I gaze and gaze, with slightly critical yet wholly affectionate appraisement

SOME study stories—all true as gospel—are forgotten Others are too pathetic, or appalling, to be told A few cut too deeply to find for themselves words Still more are so beautiful in this search for the Holy Grail that to translate them into my feeble language is like brushing the golden dust from a butterfly's wing or the bloom from a purple grape

Ling's wife saw the inside of the study oftener than any woman other than myself She came there with regular irregularity A gallant soul! With half a chance she would in the West have been a candidate for any good public work, including Parliament Nor, I imagine, would even the Upper House have affrighted her, for her courage was rooted in conviction, and of the kind that refuses to be deterred by selfish considerations or bodily ease

I know a goodly number of Chinese women who are better men than their husbands It happens so sometimes in China Ling had nothing in him, mentally or physically, save the common sense to admire his wife Even that was done more by looks than words As likely as not she adored him in private, for never publicly did she make her boast of him It is the ambition of most, if not all, Chinese women to become the mother of a son, but this honour was denied Ling's wife So she had to be content with being merely the *tai ser*, or wife, of Ling She had never so much as a name, Jemima or Mathilda to call her own

Ling earned a precarious living as a hawker of sweets, or something equally inept Her mother, in their unenlightened days, helped to keep the wolf from the door by begging As the little family progressed on the high road to self respect, this was abandoned as unseemly What Mrs Ling herself worked at I have forgotten Probably she plaited the cheap straw sandals worn by coolies Forty years ago there were few opportunities whereby a woman could ease the family straits to the extent of earning a penny or two a day Now, in our City of-the-South, conditions are greatly improved Loads of charming fancy handkerchiefs and beautifully wrought drawn thread articles, all the work of women's and girls' fingers, go regu

larly to Western lands, and the pay relieves the exigencies of the poor The head of the concern is one of our own college students Women and girls are now also largely employed in the preparation of tea for Western lands I saw both concerns in 1926, and was delighted with the remarkably good conditions under which they were run

Mrs Ling had her chance when she came and listened and yielded herself a willing captive to the Great Idea Such a God as the foreigner's was first a revelation, then a mighty inspiration A Deity who could love was beyond her wildest dreams, though there were countless gods in the temples and shrines around for her to fear In order to know more about Him, she set herself to learn to read, and between listening and reading, acquired a good working knowledge of Him for herself, and a generous overflow for others For twenty years I knew Mrs Ling intimately During that time she defrauded me for never once did she give me the chance to exhort or reprove her, unless it were not to kill herself outright with excessive country work Neither, so far as I ever discovered, could any one else put a finger on a fault Doubtless they could have put ten on mine, had they been so minded

She developed into a great-hearted propagandist, delighting to dwell on Sovereign Rights, but they were the Rights claimed by a Sovereign not of this world Nor did she hesitate to stress the duty of the obligations and responsibilities due from His subjects to the rest of the world Mrs Ling had a masculine strain, and it stood her in good stead when she faced dangers and death

Three strange women once journeyed forty miles down the river to consult the doctor Mrs Ling invited them to her house

"It is very hot," they pleaded, "but do come back with us to Greenfields, and tell us all about your doctrine"

"You would not understand me, the dialect is so different"

"Oh yes, we should," they responded, "only try us!"

"I am too young It would be improper for me to travel alone," came next

"We 'll see to that," was the response

Another older, childless woman volunteered to go with her as

chaperon Thus every lion in the path was slain, and from that time Mrs Ling became a power with which to be reckoned Let it not be forgotten, but placed to the credit of both the indifferent husbands of these two women, that they acted nobly They house kept for themselves, as most Chinese men can do, with never a grumble, even when their better halves were absent from home for months at a stretch

On this first expedition to Greenfields Mrs Ling was away three months, during which she visited seventy three places! Their names she recorded, and in addition were a number of villages whose names she forgot In every place she gave public addresses, often speaking three times a day and walking long distances

' But were you not often weary and footsore ? " I urged thinking of her bandaged feet

" Yes I was , but I walked as well as you could have done ! " *she brightly retorted Then it leaked out that months before* she had stripped off the loosened bandages from her feet to increase her walking powers Seeing my look of surprise she proceeded to convince me by turning down her cotton cloth stockings and showing me her unbound feet which of course were permanently crippled " Can you spare me a pair of your English stockings ? she asked, as more suitable to the altered conditions of her feet

From this time on, Mrs Ling and her *companion* whose soubriquet was The Countrywoman never looked back Her women friends believed in her to the extent of sharing with me and paying half the modest expenses when the two fared forth To the plains they went to the high hills, to the islands out at sea and to the wee hamlets perched so up-aloft that the best way *to reach them* was " to scramble up on hands and knees ' as *Mrs Ling laughingly described the process to me—clawing the* air with her hands in imitation of their movements

Though now freed the feet of both women had been bound in childhood and would remain only half feet as it were, to the end of their days Even so they excelled me, trudging many thousands of miles and only when exhausted hiring simple mountain chairs in which to be carried Mrs Ling and her friend were not dainty as to what they ate or where they slept

They were punctilious only in paying for it The one favour Mrs Ling asked was to be permitted to speak, which she did in temples, in houses, by the quiet roadside, or in the noisy crowded street In time this told on her vocal chords, as it does on foreigners with similar usage In the end she could only speak in a peculiar, muffled, but arrestive voice "Well, I was once preaching the Happy News against an east wind," she would explain.

She was in great demand Wherever the two went, she taught and enlightened the people, with The Countrywoman as aide-de-camp We heard this, not on their own, but on the testimony of men I knew and questioned who often followed them and were thankful to have had their path made straighter by the women's efforts

"Madam," once a courteous scholar remarked to her, after listening attentively, "you speak well But why do you dwell so on Jesus Christ? Let Him alone Only tell us about God"

"Sir," she asked, 'what should we know about God were it not for Jesus Christ?"

Occasionally she would be dubbed a "foreign woman"

"I have never been to a foreign country,' she would reply "I am from the City of the South, and have only come to bring you some good news"

Now and again listeners would congratulate her on her speaking

"The God I have come to tell you of helps me," she would reply

"God certainly does help you," was the usual response

Sometimes the difficulty of the different dialects confronted her

"Do you understand?" she would ask

If some said they did not, her plan was to bow her head and pray, "Holy Spirit help me to speak, and them to hear" "After this," she naïvely added, "they always understood'

Usually the people listened eagerly and were kind But at one of those first seventy-three places she narrowly escaped a beating There, at Ch'ie-tsing, lived a woman who, because she had dared to become a Christian shortly before, was beaten so repeatedly and severely by her husband that she died

Twice Mrs Ling visited her The second time she was sent for by the elder brother because the woman was at the point of death Mrs Ling stayed to help perform the last offices, during which a younger brother arrived from a distance, and with every intention of charging the husband with the murder of his sister The presence of Mrs Ling further inflamed his anger

' If we do not beat this woman," he exclaimed, " she will certainly take out our sister's heart ! " He forthwith called in the relatives, expecting them to help in seizing Mrs Ling by the head and administering a sound beating He stood in the house, loudly proclaiming his intention But four of the women, not all of them Christians, made a ring round Mrs Ling

" We will not let you beat her,' they avowed ' It is a good doctrine she has come to teach us "

" I was not one whit afraid," our brave friend commented to me, " even though in the house at that very moment lay one who had died because of the treatment she had received for the cause I stood for I simply covered my face with my hands and prayed for help, and that the unbelieving spirit might be cast out of him ! "

Baulked of his design, the young man went outside, but instead of finding sympathy he met another non Christian relative who showed his disapproval of such unseemly conduct He not only beat the would be beater, but also insisted on his speedy departure ! When he had gone, they buried the poor victim of man's inhumanity, in peace but not in despair

Such was one of the plain and unvarnished tales to which I listened in the quiet of the study

Once when Mrs Ling and her comrade tried to fit in a kind ness with their other work, they had a narrow escape from death A friend in the city had not seen her mother for years and her heart yearned for a sight of her face Her father had died when she was a child, after which her uncle had sold her mother to a village in the hills seventy miles off, nor had the daughter since had word from her She longed to go and find her if possible, but dared not go alone No one was willing to accompany her on so uncertain a quest For eight long years she nursed the idea in vain Then she heard Mrs Ling was going in the right direction

"But you will go with me now to find my mother, will you not?" she entreated

Who could resist the plea in such a cause? The promise was given First Mrs Ling and her comrade spent some weeks in the City-of Auspicious-Peace, which boasted of having given more officials to the Empire than any other city in the land To their surprise, our two women were kindly received there by some wealthy families whose menfolk held high appointments under the Manchus

"Teach *us* how to speak to God," some of the ladies in one of the homes said About this Mrs Ling had not the slightest difficulty

At the time arranged our three adventuresses set out, not, like Japhet, in search of a father, but of a mother! A day and a night they spent in a boat on the river Then they reached Tsing de, or Greenfields, and from there they started on a twenty-mile tramp inland By the time they reached O low it was as they expressed it, "inky dark," and their first aim was to find a shelter for the night Alack! All doors were violently slammed in their faces and they realized they had projected themselves into a nest of human hornets A mob of a hundred strong, made more terrifying to the defenceless women by the blackness of night, soon gathered round them

"You women have come to sow evil spirits among us," they cried

At first they were dumbfounded, and at a loss to account for this grave charge, but they were not left long in doubt They were told plainly that they were in the employment of the 'foreign devils,' who paid them to go about secretly disposing of little clay images two inches long and dropping these into all sorts of quiet nooks and corners

'After you go, in a week's time," they were told, "these images will grow in size and turn into devils capible of producing pestilence and death We know you are paid a dollar for every seven images you dispose of thus!"

Is it to be wondered at that the deluded folk objected to the presence of such women in their midst, and proposed drastic measures? The very mildest of these was to seize, bind them,

So great were the difficulties and dangers of going further that even the daughter of the lost one agreed that the search must be postponed.

All the twenty miles back they were greeted with cries of "Pestilence Sowers!" The idea seemed widespread in that district. A crisis was reached when they arrived at the large village of Da-chang. Again they were set upon by a big crowd of exceedingly turbulent men and women, who proposed nothing short of their immediate death. Again were they charged with carrying those small but evilly expansive demons, and Mrs. Ling once more appealed to the women to examine them. So keen was the search that their belongings strewed the road, their bags were turned inside out, their books thrown into the dust and only rescued with difficulty.

It was a fearful ordeal for our trio. One dreads to think of the consequences had the slightest article been found which the excited imagination could construe into an attempt at "demon sowing." I have said that Mrs. Ling had courage; but she admitted to me in the study that at this point her heart sank. What could she say or do to appease those inflamed minds? The position had to be faced, and she faced it like the brave creature she is. Mounting a slight eminence, she begged them to listen to her. As she faced the mob of angry jealous country men and women, whom a wrong word or look would incite beyond all restraint, her nervousness was great.

"My book actually shook in my hands!" she told me. "Lest they should see it trembling, I seized a favourable opportunity and shut it up."

Realizing that the lives of all three were in jeopardy, she poured forth from a fast-beating heart the story we know so well: of goodwill, not ill-will; of love divine and not hatred. To a large extent she calmed the multitude; but receiving their imperative orders to quit, the trio proceeded on their way. They were followed by a crowd of irate women whose one cry was:

"Let us seize them! Let us kill them! Let us beat them to death!"

Thankfully they escaped with their lives, and found their way once more to the river at Tsing-di. Here the other guests at

the inn asked to hear their wonderful story Fearing to annoy the landlord, they begged his gracious permission first, which was readily given, and to a late hour they told of the things they had learned, and the benefits they had received A notable day !

The following morning they left In the crowded boat they were plied with questions the whole day, and the following night also, and until they reached the City-of Auspicious-Peace On arriving home in the City of the South they were ordered a week's rest, and when I last saw them, they each laughingly held up to me a bottle of the doctor's tonic !

I fear me the lost mother was never found As to how the Chinese of that period evolved the idea of Westerners ' Sowing Demons," I can only add what I saw stated elsewhere at that time

' There are several books being published by the Chinese Government, and sold at cost price to encourage wide circulation, in which foreigners are said to practise this ' Black Art,' for unspeakably vile purposes And it is remarkable that up to this date none of the representatives of the foreign powers have effectively remonstrated with the Chinese Government, and made it clear to them that the Chinese Government is itself chiefly responsible for the anti foreign and missionary troubles of the time '

OUR hearts sank, like stones to the bottom of a deep well when we knew our beloved Tsang-poa, "T P" for short, had gone He, a man of the mountains, died suddenly of cholera out at sea, on the large lonely hilly Island of Jade Ring, which with its scattered hamlets stretches north of the wide mouth of our Bowl River Alone there he died, save for the few friends of his own faith who, broken hearted, were with him at the end In his coffin they brought the fallen warrior in from the sea as far as the City of the South

Only once in our chequered lives were we truly sorry for ourselves It was now when the main pillar in the temple we were toilfully building suddenly collapsed, felled to the ground by one sharp blow from the remorseless axe of death To this hour the poignance of our sorrow at his loss wrings our souls His place in our lives, in our scheme of things, never could be and never was refilled

"I would gladly have given my right arm to have kept T P with us" said Sing Su

We knew that ultimately we might have to return to our own country for good, but he, the only indispensable, would remain Alas for our poor scheming The order was reversed He went, and we remained, and for a time were well nigh in despair

No one knew the inside, and outside, ramifications of the study better than T P For years he practically lived there, easing Sing Su, as only a native born could, of the burden of work in its many increasing departments Without him these might have proved too much, even when other foreign colleagues came to our help

Though never a smoker of opium, T P, as we called him, was yet an offshoot of Sing Su's opium work, which began with Mr Ting but did not end with him The fame of many subsequent cures brought to the city six men from Crystal Lily, a pretty village among the hills of "Inner Western Streams" These men on returning home declared for Christianity, and began Christian worship in their village They likewise invited exponents of the faith to visit Crystal Lily When I went on a

visit I was interested and amused by their primitive method of gathering the scattered hillfolk to church A Chinese with good lungs blew vigorously into the mouth of a large shell or conch The sound went echoing and re-echoing melodiously far and wide among the hills To produce such glorious sounds was not as easy as it looked as I found when I essayed to do it It was during these visits that T P and his father first became acquainted with the tenets of the Christian faith

"Summers" was his Chinese surname He came from a respectable family, and was pure Chinese, but there was an element foreign in them to Crystal Lily, as was proved by their name This was Hsia—'Summers'—whereas the rest of the people bore the name Hsu, and had belonged there from time immemorial Not being members of the Hsu clan meant that the Summers family had no clan rights, that is, they could claim no share in the Ancestral Hall with its obligations, sacrifices, endowments, or privileges In spite of this they survived and prospered, according to local standards How long the Summers family had lived at Crystal Lily, or where they originally came from, history does not say.

T P's father was a silversmith A country silversmith such as he does not as a rule have a shop in which to display his goods Rather, as in our old troubadour days, he travels from village to village not offering goods for sale, but going to the families to which he is 'called' or invited, for the express purpose of fashioning silver ornaments These are usually for betrothals and weddings, and consist of silver, or silver gilt, hairpins, bracelets, and rings important articles of a bride's trousseau

T P received the best education the village could give after which he learned his father's trade, and as both were skilled craftsmen they were greatly in demand But to T P that call from a fellow craftsman, a Carpenter of Nazareth, came with an insistence that brooked neither denial nor delay He not only responded himself, he must also win response from his fellow-countrymen to the universal invitation So at twenty-one, behold him in the pulpit, a lay preacher as yet

Of course a few regarded him with veiled or open criticism Mr Ting, for instance, the man of scholarly family and a

scholar s degree, regarded T P as a forward youth Was he not likely to make a damning error in the writing of Chinese characters, and was he not lacking in the social standing he himself possessed ? Critics such as Mr Ting were referred to St Paul, who had a similar case on hand in the beloved Timothy

" Let no one despise thy youth," quoth Sing Su

In course of time T P gravitated cityward and to a seat in the study, where he was indefatigable He was the brightest and the best of helpers , indeed the only really efficient Chinese aide de camp Sing Su ever had Never weary in well doing, he more than once brought himself to the verge of the grave with his incessant work An occasion came when we felt so anxious about him that we isolated him in one of our own rooms as the best and only way of ensuring him rest peace, and restoration to health

When he came on to the regular staff, as a matter of course he followed the rest in their journeys into the country, which with its towns and villages always called for more men than could ever be poured into it from our city There he founded more churches and preached more sermons than any other, foreigner or native Devoted, sufficiently scholarly, yet sagacious, his name became widely known and held in high esteem not only by Christians of all classes but also by hosts of non-Christians, especially of the upper classes Officials did not disdain his aid Some of them on a critical occasion, offered him through their intermediaries a large sum of money if he would use his influence in their favour But this proved no temptation In addition to his excellent organizing ability, he was a remarkable instance of devotion to his Lord

To my satisfaction, T P had also that human touch which appeals to East and West If not a dandy, he liked and saw to it that he had good clothes , and he had a preference for clean personal possessions These standards, particularly in country places, were hard to maintain , for the Chinese had not then learned how to make soap other than a poor substitute, which looked like a mixture of coarse chopped straw and some other dark substance Indeed the composition looked far more adapted to destroying than cleaning clothes, and was impossible for personal use Normally the hard working farmers had more



Photo b T Lu e F R G S

A Settler's Chinese farm steed with terraced rice fields

than enough to do to supply their families with wadded bed-quilts in the winter, and how could they then provide for recurring and welcome week-end visitors? Sing Su took his own rolled up bedding, and appropriated my house coolie to carry it slung at one end of his pole, with the provision basket at the other end But many of the Messengers of Peace trusted to Providence for bed-quilts! Of such was not T P He followed the foreigner's example, and had a coolie who carried his roll of bedding and small blame to him for desiring so necessary a luxury That apparently simple sign of hospitality, moreover, a cup of tea, weak and minus sugar, is of cost to the countryman It is not the easy product of a fire of coals and a kettle always on the boil It can be had in South China only by making a fresh fire of the grass and twigs which have been laboriously scraped from the hills in the dry autumn weather, and which, at best, only produce a quickly expiring flame T P's coolie, like the foreigner's made his tea for him

Recently I read that the Chinese love Secret Societies There is much to justify the statement, yet to our knowledge we never personally knew a single member of any Secret Society, nor did we wish to do so Yet we also knew that in those days the land was riddled with them Some officials were said to belong to one or other of these dreaded camorras They were anti dynastic or anti foreign and some were probably both, and I have told of the ravages on the foreigners at Kucheng and elsewhere by the White Lily Society The Chinese are often called a peace-loving people, and that this is true, we could abundantly testify All with whom we came in contact as *friends* were eminently peaceable But it is equally true that over the whole country in those days certain devastating warlike, murdering and ferocious folk banded themselves together who give the lie to the idea that the country was entirely law abiding and peaceably inclined The year of fury 1900, provided a notable exhibition of this Westerners call its instigators the Boxers as the Chinese belonging to the Society styled it The-I ists-for Justice-and Harmony Society It was impossible for us to claim the Chinese as a peace-loving nation in those days Nor has it been my happy lot to know a China wholly at peace within her wide borders from 1884 to this year

of grace, 1931 For complete peace we still wait, with such hope and patience as we can muster

It was singular that in 1900 the oldest and, presumably, the most seasoned members of our little community were absent from the City-of-the-South Sing Su and I were in England during that period of awful strain and danger Unknown to those whom she intended to destroy, the Old Buddha—as the Dowager Empress was called—issued an Edict to her highest officials, the viceroys, governors of provinces, and taotais, ordering them "cruelly to exterminate" every foreigner, or Occidental, within their jurisdiction This Edict, we rejoice to know, did not meet with entire acceptance Two of the highest officials in the capital, Peking, risked, and lost, their positions and lives They dared to alter the word "kill" to "protect" the foreigners, and in consequence they themselves were slain by Her Majesty's orders But in Shansi province the governor obeyed orders, slew with the sword fifty-six men, women, and children, mostly British in his own official residence, and countenanced the killing of another hundred in the province The governor of the next province, Tuan-fang, of gracious memory, acted differently He sent for his missionary friend, Moir Duncan, took him alone, and secretly told him of the Edict ordering him to have them all killed

"I can keep this to myself for three days," said Tuan fang to his British friend, "but no more Tell your fellow countrymen and go at once To night! Haste you!"

They did, and reached Hankow alive, after various dangers from Boxer soldiers *en route* Later Moir Duncan went down the river Yangtsze to Shanghai, thence up the coast by steamer to Tientsin and on to Peking, which was then occupied by Western troops of every nationality American, French, British German, Russians Japanese had been sent by their various Governments to relieve the Westerners besieged in Tientsin and Peking by the Boxers with the connivance of the Dowager Empress Helped by some of her officials, she had shrewdly diverted the Boxers, who were primarily anti-Manchu, from the destruction of the dynasty to the extermination of the foreigners One day in Peking Moir Duncan saw a number of foreign soldiers—not British, I am happy to say—

trying to force an entrance into a large Chinese house which was shuttered

"You must respect that house," he called "The owner saved our lives in Shensi"

When they would have ignored him, he communicated with their officers, who ordered them to desist The house belonged to Tuan fang and in his turn Moir Duncan saved his property!

Alas, the kindly and great man was later killed in West China by his own soldiers One of the Chinese interpreters with the Chinese Labour Corps in France, whom Sing Su and I were some years later to entertain in London while they were on leave from France during the Great War, then told us he had himself witnessed the cruel deed When Tuan fang could not satisfy their unreasonable demands for money, the soldiers seized him and commanded him to kneel down

"I kneel to no one but my Emperor," he sturdily replied, whereupon they slew him to the grief of the many Westerners as well as Chinese to whom he had been friendly, and some of whose lives he had saved

All unknown to the handful of white people in the City of the South that year 1900 the Dowager Empress's Edict to kill them lay there a fortnight! Every official was in favour of putting it into execution except one But, mercifully, he was the highest, and his will could not be easily overridden Otherwise Woe betide them! At the peril of his own life he resisted the importunities of the rest of the officials and said "No" Even the effect of opium smoking had not deadened his sense of right and justice, nor blinded him to a suicidal policy

Instead, he, the Taotai, ordered the foreigners to leave the city and seek the refuge of our beloved island River's Heart, which sixteen years earlier, after the riot of 1884 had sheltered Sing Su and myself Though ignorant of the fatal Edict against them, the placards on the gates of our compound that they were all to be killed" coupled with rumours that the Boxers were nearing the city, decided them to obey the Taotai's instructions

"I had barely time to tumble a few necessities into a box or two" Mrs Thanks told me later And I could very well believe her when she wrote the following about her house, built a few yards away from the White House

"It was heart-breaking to look round my bonnie home, knowing that the love gifts brought from England six months before would in all likelihood be burned or destroyed."

Mr. Thanks bravely spent the first night alone in our compound in the city, and we can well imagine Mrs. Thanks slept little on the River's Heart. There, in the empty consulate, sixteen of them were marooned, and crowded together. They slept on the floors, six or seven in a room, using boxes and open umbrellas to support the net curtains necessary to protect them from greedy mosquitoes. One tiny wash-bowl served for all, and they were grateful for it. A newly married couple, after two days' honeymoon, had now to turn their attention to the saving of their lives. The suspense and uncertainty as to what was about to happen to them was the worst hardship they had to endure.

But the fears of the foreigners were light as thistledown compared with the sufferings and terrors of the Christian Chinese and those suspected of being friendly to the foreigners. The country places were the abodes of unlicensed cruelty. I can only mention a few of the deeds that were committed. In the City-of-Auspicious-Peace six of the Christians were, on demand of the Boxers, seized by the official. This man, however, did his utmost to spare them, and instead of yielding to the demand for their lives, he only beat each of them six hundred blows! At White Springs they burnt the church, and beat the pastor almost to death. Indeed they would have killed him outright had it not been for the protection of an influential man. Here also at White Springs fifty Christians lost their homes and their goods, and barely saved their lives by a bribe of three thousand dollars—three hundred pounds; though how they scraped together this sum, enormous for them, was to us a mystery.

All the little churches in the South Creek were demolished, except at Maple Grove, our old friend Ding-er's place. There some of the gentry lent a hand in protecting the Christians, although formerly they had clapped Ding-er and others into prison for holding service on Sunday. Sad to say, we lost in this region a most useful man. Usually a cheerful, hard-working, tall, strong fellow, he had been very ill for some time, and when the folk avowedly went to kill him, the shock proved

tracted countrymen For them, alas, no such relief came as to the company of foreigners on the River's Heart Having no telegraph or possible communication with the outside world, history repeated itself How eagerly they watched as Sing Su and I had done years earlier, for the steamer to find its circuitous way up the river ! And they were just as uncertain as we had been as to whether it would come at all

Arrive it did and punctually for once ! Their joy and gratitude knew no bounds On board also was that admirable representative of orderliness, a capable British consul, armed with instructions to remove them For it was totally impossible to protect them from the mob, who might exterminate them, since their lives hung upon the will of but one man, the Taotai, which might be set at naught They had no option but to go, yet it was like the dividing asunder of soul and body But for wonderful T P it would have been well nigh impossible for the men at least In the foreigners the sad Christians saw their one earthly hope of possible protection from their own barbarous ignorant countrymen The officials they reasoned, were bound to make an effort to protect these, if only through fear of consequences Surely they might hope for some shelter under their wing, little guessing that but for the Taotai even the fate of the foreigners had been sealed, and all in " one red burial blent," as happened in Shansi It was when they clung about their foreign friends particularly Mr Thanks, begging him not to leave them " like sheep without a shepherd," as they said, that T P again stepped into the breach

" Do not detain the foreigners," he counselled with truly sublime courage and magnanimity " We shall be safer without them he tried to hearten them by saying

This meant that on him alone, a man of thirty, would rest the whole burden of listening to the harrowing stories of the beaten dispossessed, and homeless, of counselling them, of the labour of dispensing the monetary help, to provide which some of the foreigners stripped themselves bare, and which they undertook to supply regularly What it all meant I can but faintly indicate No wonder T P wrote " I have rest neither day nor night ' And physically, he was not a strong man

The consul at once took command of his nationals, ordering them aboard the steamer that was to take them away—for how long, or if for ever, they knew not The distraction of leaving behind such suffering was terrible As the steamer dropped down the river, leaving the city wall behind, their hearts were unspeakably heavy and disappointed Some of them had come up the Bowl River but a few short months before, full of bright hopes of the good they might do, and with few misgivings

In that fatal 1900 China once more, over the whole land, lifted up her heel against the strangers within her gates, many of whom had placed their lives at her service Again she inflicted shockingly wanton injury on her guests But in consequence she was herself a terrible and the worst sufferer In our old world are stone walls the written and unwritten laws of civilization For the last hundred years or so, our distressful China has wasted the strength she could ill spare by butting her head blindly against these walls, hurting most of all herself

Months passed, bringing with the aid of the *force majeure* in Peking a measure of safety over the country The irrepressible foreigners also returned to the City of the-South Sing Su in England had offered to return when first the troubles began, but was refused consent

" Why place another life in jeopardy ? " he was asked

As soon as possible he went back But meanwhile, whoever else came or went, T P remained To his influence we attributed the fact that the city was saved from riot and bloodshed He ministered to the Christians who fled there by the score It was he who along with Mr Thanks not only piloted the compensation claims of the Christians to a satisfactory conclusion but patiently struggled to have them reinstated in their own distant homes During this epoch Sing Su wrote to me left behind in England

" We are now fighting bravely the most dangerous circumstances we have ever yet passed through The officials in 1901, will do almost anything for us, the Christians know this, and some would love to take advantage of it '

Who can blame them after what they had suffered for wanting to bask a little in the sunshine of unwonted official favour ?

"But," added he, "we are successfully resisting this spirit, which is largely due to T P"

Would that now I could lay down my pen, saying, "All's well!" But the beginning of this chapter showed that this was not so Again and again T P had bidden us adieu in the study before departing to the country work, to which he took an ardent spirit Two brief years after the Boxer Rising, in September 1902, he said good bye to Sing Su for the last time He was due at Jade Ring, then our most distant outpost Cholera was raging over the whole district Later it was estimated that six thousand had died of it in the City of-the-South, and twenty thousand in the countryside, during those two months of September and October Sing Su expostulated with T P, and tried to detain him

"Early September is too soon to start country work, T P," he urged "Wait a month Give the cholera a chance to settle down before you venture It will be over by October"

But T P declined to listen

"I am due there," he said "and the people will be disappointed if I do not keep the appointment I do not know when the opportunity will come again You know yourself how filled up is my time"

Then, as if to settle the argument he added

"Besides, I was born in this climate, am used to it, and can stand it better than you foreigners"

So, armed with the chlorodyne with which he had saved the lives of other cholera victims, but could not save his own, he set out on what proved to be his last journey

When the funeral cortège from Jade Ring reached the City-of the South, our foreign custom would have brought the coffin to the city church for a service But Chinese thought was adverse to this Daily, coffins were carried out of the city, but full ones must not be brought in, lest the ghosts of the departed arise and trouble the inhabitants So the procession halted, and a service was held on the bank of the wide river, outside the busy North Gate of the city A huge crowd of Christians and non Christians gathered They listened in hushed silence while Sing Su told of their fellow countryman's self sacrificing life, laid down at thirty two, after ten years spent in the highest

interest of his people It was an impressive occasion there on the river's bank Then the big boat, with its light burden, was slowly rowed across the river, past the River's Heart, to the other side, then away up the beautiful South Creek to the quiet grave among the hills which encircle Crystal Lily, where T P rests till the dawning

What nobler tribute could be paid to T P than that which Sing Su paid in his first burst of grief?

"*We* cannot entertain selfish aims and interests while such as he is gasping out his life so far from his loved ones A dozen men could be better spared, and no three men can fill his place *To lose him—well, I am not sure it would not pay to lose me* rather He had my warmest admiration, and how we are to manage without him I cannot think And yet, thank God, T P was always as anxious as we were to make us independent *of any one man, with the result that, outwardly, we seem to be* in as good working condition as ever"

Among many others, for one thing alone we owe him a debt of gratitude that, do what we may, we can never repay His devotion and faithfulness during the Boxer upheaval of 1900 were beyond reward

Was T P, then, perfect? Recalling the vagaries of my own human heart, I would unhesitatingly say No

"If, on rare occasions," said Sing Su 'admonition was called for, T P always received it in a chastened spirit never, so far as I knew, with pride and resentment He learned by his mistakes'

But a Greater than T P, the Master of the exacting demands said, "Be ye perfect" Judged by that incomparable standard would T P *stand or fall?* We *thankfully resign the office of* judge into the hands of One who also loved this young man and with a love that was Perfect As for us we shall not look upon his like again

The study door is closed

CHAPTER XXII INTERLUDE IN STONE

IT was evident I could not take our two young children to England without help from some one. for a sharp attack of pneumonia had reduced me almost to the point of extinction, and this after our passages were booked Sing Su would go with us as far as Hong-Kong, but could leave his post for no longer, he said What was to be done?

"An idea occurs to me," he suddenly said "The Bread-maker, Ah Djang, shall go with you as amah! Why not? His devotion to the children is beyond dispute"

Indeed we had often said it was a pity Ah Djang and his wife could not exchange places But, alas, Amah could not cook, though Ah Djang could nurse When this original idea of his accompanying us was mooted, he readily consented

"When I lose Da ling and Sea-borne, I shall buy a child," Amah decisively announced to me shortly before our departure

"A boy, of course," I rejoined

"No," she emphasized strongly, "I shall buy a girl"

"What for?" I queried, knowing the supervalue of sons in China

"Because a girl will look after me when I am old," she predicated

Buy a girl she did, for the sum of half a crown We did not refer to this when her pretty little maiden joined the happy throng that clustered round me when I began life afresh as a schoolmistress

Before our departure friends brought us wonderful if curious, presents To Sea borne was given a Chinese official hat ready for when he became a mandarin To Da ling was given an elaborate Chinese lady's toilet box, made of fine wood This is now in the possession of her little niece, Sea borne's daughter, whose delight it is to pull out the small hidden drawers or open the brass entwined fishes with which the box is closed To all of us were brought cakes eggs and sweetmeats provision for the journey!

It was evening when we embarked on the s s *Eternal Peace*, accompanied thereto by a large company Some of them, to enhance the occasion, carried long flaming torches, plaited strips of bamboo dipped in kerosene "Do take care!" I cried to one who had flung his torch perilously near somebody's thatched roof abutting on the roadside We did not wish to go off with a flare of burning buildings Loud resounding crackers heralded our departure—to the terrorizing of Da ling, who was always cowardly in the matter of gunpowder

From Shanghai to Hong-Kong was terribly stormy We were driven hundreds of miles out of our course, it was said So ill was I that I wondered how I could possibly survive the remaining "ten thousand miles" In Hong-Kong came the sad parting with the close companion of nearly eight years He was to go back to country journeys, duty, and diligence But, be it noted the wander-lust was not dead Sing Su returned to Shanghai by way of Canton, Swatow, and Amoy—a circuitous route!

On our P & O liner were only two Chinese Both were following the devious fortunes of trusted Western friends One was Ah Djang, the other was the servant of the British consul who was in the City-of the South during the 1884 Riot, and who was now *en route* for his new post in Burma The consul, Mr E H Parker, was a great scholar who afterwards became Professor of Chinese in the Manchester University Both Chinese asserted they could get nothing to eat The English stewards did not want them and they in turn objected to feed with the lascars

"Those lascars" remarked the Bread maker disdainfully to me, "are so barbarous they eat with their fingers!

In the end the consul with the Chinese in tow sought an interview with the purser, who asked what their requirements were

"See how moderate are my needs!" proclaimed the consul's man "Rice and eggs are all I ask"

The Bread maker required only rice and fish to keep him in life I trust they achieved this simple diet As I dared not ask I never knew for I could do no more for them myself

Before leaving Hong Kong Sing Su advised me

If you feel equal to the strain you had better let the

Bread maker return home from Colombo, the half-way house to China England is a difficult place for one who speaks no English You will not need him in Yorkshire, and he would feel lost in London "

Already Ah Djang was realizing the unconscionable distance fast piling up between himself and the City of-the-South Sing Su cautioned me

" If you decide to dispense with him, immediately you arrive in Colombo, find out a missionary and ask his kind permission for the Bread maker to stay on his premises for the fortnight that must elapse before a China-bound P & O steamer can pick him up again "

Easier said than done The instant we reached Colombo I took a carriage, and the whole family, including the Bread-maker and his *chah la*, dress basket, set out in search of a Messenger of Peace Alas there was an unseemly dearth Not a solitary missionary could I find We ended at the post office, and in the directory I searched for the addresses of people in Colombo there for the benefit of others than themselves Not a single person of that ilk was tabulated as living there True, there were some living in outlying districts, but I had no time *to go after them, as our steamer left in a few hours*

Glancing in despair further down the page, behold, writ in large capitals was this " Salvation Army Barracks ", and in Colombo too I was ready to leap for joy, and no wonder, with a non English speaking Chinese on my somewhat frail shoulders We soon found the Barracks which was no mis nomer for the building The friendly Chinese in charge told me the ' Major ' was out, but if we would return in half an hour he would be back and all would be well As we drove about the town, back there came to me that smell of the Far East which had first assailed my nostrils in Colombo in 1884 Sir Walter Lawrence speaks of it as an odour of turmeric, but to me it rather bespoke the concentrated essence of too great an abundance of salt fish !

Suddenly there appeared before our wondering gaze a vision of beautiful angels Never, thought I, have I seen such heavenly visitants from an ethereal world walking on earthly roads Two fair haired, fair faced women enveloped in semi-

transparent draperies of soft apricot shade, floated into view Who could they be? Surely the satellites of an Oriental potentate

"Salvation Army lassies," we were told, to our astonishment, when we inquired Never before had I seen figures so appealing to the imagination

On returning to the Barracks, I was taken upstairs into a perfectly bare room, where, seated behind a table, was the Major, a lean faced, tanned Englishman resplendent in a gorgeous red jacket He rather chilled me Listen he did to my tale of difficulty, but with no encouraging word or smile when I appealed for help He made amends, for at the end he quietly said he would do what I asked

"Your man can stay at the Reformatory here till his ship comes."

'Oh!" I cried, "but he is a perfectly respectable man I could not leave Ah Djang in the company of thieves, even reformed And he has good clothes, you know!"

I had noticed that "Reformatory for Thieves" was placarded large on a building as we had driven about the town There was a convenient small square hole cut in the bare floor, and the Major called down it

"Is that room near the front door empty?"

"No but it will be at midday," came up the answer

The Major then said that our man servant could stay in that room

"A man shall go with him to show him the market, where he can buy his food When the steamer comes, we will escort him to the ship Please, however, warn him about one thing There are thieves all over the world, but I verily think bigger ones in Colombo than anywhere else! Warn him never to leave his room without locking the door'

In a short time the Bread maker's fate was settled When I asked the Major how much I might have the pleasure of paying for this undiluted milk of human kindness he replied

"You will pay nothing"

And though, in distress, I begged to be allowed to acknowledge such service in the only way open to me, nothing would move that stubborn Englishman to take my money.

Sorrowfully enough we left the Bread maker there at the

front door of the Barracks, *chah la* and all When I told him of the need to keep the door of his room locked, he cried

"I 'll never stir outside till I go to the ship"

This vow, needless to say, was more honoured in the breach than the observance when the strangeness had worn off But the parting with our faithful old servant friend seemed like severing the last link between us and our dear home in China I gladly forgive his impertinence when, with overflowing eyes and tremulous voice, he actually said to me "Mistress! You will take care of the children, won't you?" I knew what he meant They were what mattered most in his in both our eyes

Faithfully the Salvation Army Major redeemed his word How can he not for ever after hold a high place in my esteem and in the Bread maker's? When the day came, members of the Army not only escorted him to the ship but sought an interview with the captain, inviting him to take so important a passenger under his own wing From me the solitary Sing Su received a letter, peremptorily requesting him to send that Major or his successor as big a cheque as the exigencies of our purse would allow Nor was it returned

One delightful episode during that voyage was the gracious act done by a great lady the Marchioness of Lansdowne, then on her way home from India To give happiness to the children, she one day presented each child with a handsome toy Daling was the joyous recipient of a Japanese lady, in full costume • It still exists somewhere in its glass case But think of the additional labour of carrying along a case of toys for children one had never seen nor would ever see again!

Our landing at Dover in March 1892 was the acme of discomfort It was bitterly cold and drizzling and I thought we never should disembark from the small cross Channel boat We might have been criminals so tiresome and prolonged seemed the Customs inquisition to us travel worn passengers Once ashore I rushed with the children into the Lord Warden Hotel That too felt cold so I hurried the lambs and myself off to the warmest place I knew our beds In the morning I was informed a gentleman wished me to know he had arrived in the middle of the night and would await me downstairs

" Please light a fire, or I shall never get out of bed," I said to the chambermaid As close up to it as we could stand, I managed to make Da ling and Sea borne presentable, then sent them down, holding each other's hands, to find their unknown Uncle On joining them I found a brother, of sacred memory, engrossed in making love to the two little people and doubtless trying also to discover what queer effect their having been born and bred in such a peculiar land as China had upon them The Bread maker had parted from us aliens from across the seas with tears in voice and eyes The Englishman greeted us in precisely the same manner Which helps to prove that East and West are akin in that important factor, the heart

We were escorted north by the same generous hearted brother, and deposited safely in the old home from which I had gone forth nearly eight years before It had seemed then an adventurous journey Three out of the five brothers among whom in tomboy fashion I had grown up gathered round the happy tea table, making it cheerful with their jokes and laughter To the venerable dear grandparents the children, despite the lack of anticipated pigtails, were the greatest wonder of all, and they remained their delight for the short span of time that was left to them

I have called it the " old home, but Oak Tree House was both old and new, its history being closely interwoven with the fortunes of the district in which it stood The first Oak Tree House had what, in my childish days, seemed an enchanted garden Nowhere else were there such big rhododendron bushes, or with finer blooms this despite the harsh climate Huge trees, which were rarities in that neighbourhood grew exceedingly tall They provided sympathetic gloom for my chagrin in their leafy branches when the band of brothers refused to take me with them on their nefarious and punishable escapades because I was a girl forsooth !

When it was discovered that a seam of stone ran under the house and garden their fate was fixed Down came the trees, also the house the latter to be rebuilt near by on land that had already been delved or emptied of its stone This land had been remade that is restored to its original appearance by the same earth being tipped back into the chasm Much of the

land round about had been remade in this fashion, and was considered good enough for most purposes. Certainly it proved capable of upholding the weight of such buildings as the new Board Schools when they became the vogue. For economy's sake, much of the old stone was used in the building of the new Oak Tree House, which gave the house a semi-aged appearance. But even so, the rooms were large and comfortable, and it was no mean abode.

A new garden replaced the old, but there was never anything enchanting about it in my eyes. Big trees and rhododendrons declined to flourish on such man-made soil. The greatest charm was the prospect—the local name for a view. Below us, on clear days, from our front door, it resembled a far-reaching, wide-stretching amphitheatre, rising gently to the horizon. On this were sprinkled distant villages and towns, amongst which we proudly counted thirteen tall church spires. Our summers were rarely warm enough for us to dispense with fires, and our winters were rigorous. How the wild winds blew; and how glorious it was to go racing out on a dark night, to be searched by them, and almost blown to pieces by their fierce onslaughts!

We towered eight hundred feet above the old town, and for many years the Bank was the only road from it to us. It was tortuous and extremely steep: a corkscrew. The weekly drive to town included walking half the distance of two miles. Only the driver, my mother at this part of the road, was allowed to retain her seat in the high two-wheeled trap as it crawled slowly down the mountain-side, or Bank, its speed held in check by nothing but the strength of the horse's legs. The ascent was even harder, and was accomplished by the steed slowly zig-zagging and dragging the trap, with its self-same occupant, up to the top, where the rest of us remounted and drove happily home. I believe I could recognize to-day the upward-toiling stranger who, sixty years ago, stood stock-still in amazement and admiration. His eyes followed my mother's every movement as she guided her horse round that last precipitous turn at the bottom of the corkscrew Bank. A change all this from the semi-tropical City-of-the-South!

On a plateau at the summit of the hill stood Beacon Pan, a raised iron structure with a basket for fire at the top of it. My

mother would tell tales of how the old town celebrated the Crimean victories when its heroes came back "from Russia" Oxen, whole, were roasted in the streets of the town below, and at night a great fire flared far and wide from Beacon Pan In those days, though, Beacon Hill was covered with trees and verdure Now, alas, *mill chimneys, chemical and other works* in the busy town, have marred its visage The hill is as bare as a board, with scarcely a blade of grass to relieve its grey ugliness On the brow of the hill, for about a mile and in the direction of Oak Tree House, were a few scattered stone built houses and grass fields enclosed by stone walls, then the beautiful prospect, and the beginning of another long but less sharp descent into another Bottom Our way home from the top of the Bank passed by the wind swept house which Emily Brontë made the prototype of Wuthering Heights We were as a city set on a hill Every departure therefrom entailed a descent, but the Bank was the worst And yet even it fell into desuetude For there is one lesson which the returned traveller learns to-day, and that is that his own country is not standing still, any more than the land of his sojourn He comes back and perceives the changes and improvements to which those on the spot have already grown accustomed And when his own kin have helped to bring about these developments he realizes the value of good family stock

The town fathers wished to bring us under their rule and governance by making us a ward in their township To render this palatable, they offered to cut at the town's expense a wide brand new road which was to slope gently round the face of the mountain, down into the town The offer was accepted after much discussion Ever after, only a few hardy pedestrians went the old way We came across a little belated urchin one evening who expressed his preference for the new but longer route

"The Bank shakes my belly so!" he reasoned, without mincing his speech

We were more than a village we were a wide district—a big shoulder thrust out from the backbone of England, the Pennine Range, over a corner of which ran the remains of an old Roman road Buried in that shoulder ran valuable and tremendous

seams of beautiful stone Indeed, there the only plenitude was stone, and by it and from it my forebears and their descendants earned their livelihood Nor was it an obscure calling Blocks of their stone found their way to Lancashire for the making of chemical cisterns, to London, for public buildings like the General Post Office, to continental cities for similar purposes Its flags paved the Thames Embankment, and are there to-day, glistening in the rain Its setts no doubt still sett the streets of Lima, in South America Nay, the enduring threshold steps of new quadrangles in this old university city of Oxford come from those bold quarries Only now, when the natural product is superseded at times by handsome-looking but less permanent substitutes, "made stone," does one realize what a remarkable occupation had the quarry-owner and stone-merchant He leased, often for a generation, land which he knew or suspected contained stone He paid perhaps a couple of guineas a yard for the privilege before he began operations

Nor were the men who wrought the stone featherweights, either in stature or character I overheard a harassed quarry-owner's complaint one day

"All quarrymen are difficult, but ours seem the most awkward of all!" said he

I never heard what the men said of their masters, but I know they wasted no outward signs of deference upon them A young lady visitor who drove round to some of the quarries with us uttered indignant protestations

"Fancy!" she said, shocked "Those men call your father by his Christian name, without either a Mr or a Sir!"

Drink, unfortunately, was the bane of too many of them, and on it their wastage, in time and pocket, was grievous Perhaps the carters were the worst sinners It was pitiable and past bearing when they kept teams of beautiful patient horses standing with empty carts by a public-house door for hours at a stretch while they drank I remember as a girl going out into the centre of the road to escape a number of our own quarrymen as they came reeling along the causeway after a long sojourn at a public house. They noticed my pronounced attitude

"That 's Charles Farrar's lass," stuttered one to the others; "shoo 's flaid o' us"

"You are right,' I thought "I am indeed afraid of you"

Probably it was the same man who on these occasions, invariably referred to his wife as 'Oor oud bed stocks," that is, "our old bed posts!" Possibly this was a term of affection, implying reliability on her part

But among these quarrymen were others of a different calibre Undoubtedly, when given a chance, Grace makes havoc of original sin From a quarryman I have listened to a sermon as chaste and beautiful as one could desire During the Great War the fear of one young man was not lest he be killed (which he was) But he feared lest he become contaminated by the bad language common in the camps

These huge men were specialists in their own way true quarrymen who had learned their trade as bearers delvers, hewers, and quarry hill men They wrought with iron chisels and round hardwood hammers, either on the quarry hill or in the open depths below They split by hand the rough blocks to the best advantage Then they chiselled and wrought upon them till they were as smooth and level as a board, fit for a place of honour in the buildings to which they were assigned

When a new quarry was to be made, the bearers were the first on the spot No weakling could be a bearer Theirs the heavy task of digging and removing the earth and shale till the stone was bared They might dig and shovel to perhaps a depth of a hundred and fifty feet before a particle of the hidden treasure revealed itself With the aid of wheelbarrows the bearers filled a truck with the soil, which was sometimes loosened by blasting, and the truck was then attached to a massive chain hanging from the crane above An engine balanced perilously on the edge of the crevasse, drew the truck to the surface, after which it was emptied into some convenient tip or dumping-ground The deep rents and gashes made by the quarries into the breast of Mother Earth were wild, cruel and shapeless and sometimes left so for all time How such labour, such tremendous efforts as were required could be made to pay, is a mystery Often they failed to pay Most of the stone had also to go down the fearful corkscrew Bank to town and rail The biggest blocks were chained fast on to the heavy four wheeled waggons,

drawn by glorious horses, the strongest horse being put into the shafts Indeed the long-suffering creature was sometimes forced on to its haunches in a noble effort to hold back the huge weight pressing on it from behind down that Bank An iron slipper placed under a back wheel was all that could be used to impede the descent Though it was sometimes a hair-raising spectacle, we never suffered a serious accident on the Bank, as far as I recall

Such was the neighbourhood into which I introduced the two little strangers from China It was there we left them on our return to that far off land, and they too learned to love the click-click of chisel on stone

"They have fallen among thieves," said my father, and soon indeed did their beautiful English show it!

"Oi 'll poise tha," I found Sea borne practising one day, which means "I 'll kick you!" I stood him with his face in the corner

But times have changed and for the better Compulsory education created for the time being two languages one in the elementary schools, spoken by the children to their teachers, the other for home consumption! Landmarks have been removed From the high wall in the main lane the stocks have disappeared About 1866, when I was a small girl, I saw a poor daft young fellow sitting with his legs imprisoned therein for some unknown offence Gone, too, is our Witch of Endor Once my girl cousin pointed to an old woman standing at her cottage door

"She is a witch," said she

"How do you know?" I queried

'Every night at eleven she stands at her door and calls 'Tom, Tom!' to her witch's black cat!" Proof indisputable What fearful joys my children had missed!

Gone, likewise, are the hard drinking quarrymen and carters Near our biggest quarry was a public-house, where, on wage day, the men formerly went, and remained till half their sturdily earned money had gone down their throats Recently a new landlord was required, and a candidate came to view the premises and make inquiries It was wage day. When he discovered that there was only one customer that day, and he merely for a

packet of cigarettes, he concluded that The White Horse would be a bad speculation, and left it

China had changed during those eight years, and England had changed too—and for the better And while my father and brothers had brought the good stone to the surface and trimmed it and sent it to the service of man, had we not, those many thousand miles away, found good stone also fit for the City whose foundations are sunk on a Rock? Nor can either sort of stone be had without labour and intelligence and some times heartache

CHAPTER XXIII I AM REQUIRED TO KEEP SCHOOL

SING SU was an adept at setting people to work I never knew his equal in telling others what to do, it usually ended in their wishing to do it! On the two of us returning alone to the City of-the South, he was not backward in informing me what he expected of me, and I fell into the trap

"People in England," he reasoned, "are exerting themselves in bringing up and educating the two little folk we have so confidingly entrusted to them What is more fitting than that you should show your gratitude by caring for the neglected girls of our Chinese city?" Such was the origin of my Girls' Day School the first of its kind in the neighbourhood

"But for it," said a Chinese city magnate at a public meeting thirty years later, "we should not have any such day schools in our city"

Golden hearted Chang's three young orphan girls were my nucleus, the only boarders How I loved that seat of learning, the big airy pleasant whitewashed room, which ran alongside our green lawn! My difficulty was to be functioning inside it at nine in the morning because of other and domestic duties But it was still harder to leave it at half-past one, when imperative messages would come across from the White House, saying that Sing Su demanded my immediate presence at the belated tiffin In the afternoon I handed over the jurisdiction to a fatherly pedagogue, who introduced the girls to the intricacies of reading and writing "characters", a better term for which, or so it seems to me, would be hieroglyphics

What then was left for me to teach them? Much! To read and write the vernacular, their mother tongue, for which there were often no equivalent "characters" As I have already said, Sing Su had reduced the dialect, the spoken language, to writing with the aid of our English alphabet, thereby giving the unlearned a new and easy method in which to express themselves in writing This method many rapidly and joyfully adopted For the first time in their experience they could

write what they spoke, a delightful revelation to the men, women, and girls connected with us, and no less so to me We began school dictation thus

" Write down ' Nyi va ch'ih ba mi ? ' " I would say to my damsels, it being their commonest saying, meaning, " Have you eaten your rice ? "

This they would do almost straight away, and correctly, according to the spelling they had learnt from Sing Su's primer, and which he had arranged phonetically to suit their sounds, though not in the same order as our English alphabet Then I would call upon True Cloud (Tsang Yung) to read aloud what her little fingers had written She would do this clearly but mechanically, not comprehending what she had read I would look at her, and repeat the sentence

" Well now," I would ask, ' what does it say ? You know it well enough ! "

The light of comprehension would slowly steal over her face I believe she would have danced if she had known how, for joy at the great feat she had accomplished For the first time, not only in her own but in the existence of her forebears, she had written, read, and understood a sentence she spoke every day of her life.

In this dame's school simple arithmetic was inculcated But perhaps the lesson they most needed and found most difficult was how to sing It is impossible to imagine sounds more nasal than those which our young girls emitted Our Pilgrim Fathers could not begin to compete with them Sometimes I tried to teach them how not to sing nasally by imitating them My efforts were at least provocative of laughter I wonder if this form of singing, excruciating to us had its origin in their idea that all singing should be falsetto When Edie Thanks, aged six, returned from England and went to church for the first time, she hid her face on her mother s arm and wept with fright as the volume of awful sounds tore the air when the singing began But a couple of weeks found her lustily adding her small quota to the rest of the congregation The girls improved greatly, and soon were able to play a helpful part as choir on Sundays when so far as the general congregation was concerned every man's voice was in direct opposition to his

neighbour's Early one Christmas morning this girls' choir came and serenaded me with " Christians, awake ! Salute the happy morn " In the afternoon at church they sang " Hark ! the herald angels sing," so sweetly in time and tune that Sing Su could not refrain from crying out in English

" They sing like little angels ! "

Sewing was also part of our curriculum, and came easier than singing When China New Year arrived and every one ought to wear, according to revered custom, some new garment, each of them could proudly don a coat of her own sewing I also obtained patterns of the beautiful drawn-thread work for which South China was already noted In view of their hand to-mouth existence, I longed that they should be able to earn more than the thirty to seventy cash, or penny-halfpenny a day which was all that the ordinary woman worker did earn at straw sandal plaiting almost the only outlet for her industry Their skill with the needle went far beyond mine Their butterflies and their spider's webs I never attempted During the sewing-hour I one day saw a big girl, Siu iang, crying over her piece of work

" What are you crying for ? " I went and asked her

" I cannot do it," she sobbed, like any other girl in the world

" Bring it to me, and let me see if I can do it," I valiantly proclaimed In reality I shook in my shoes fearing my inability would put me to shame before my whole school She obeyed, and to my relief it proved easy I showed her how it was done, and dismissed her in lordly fashion

" There, take it, and never cry over any work again "

I fear me, she may have done

Later Siu iang produced the most elaborate drawn thread work the proceeds of which helped to keep both herself and her mother in law from want For Siu iang's fiancé died, and she became a widow before she was a wife

In former days it was a good working principle for the Christians to be even stricter than their neighbours in the observance of local ordinary customs So as it was considered undesirable for young girls to be much in evidence on the public streets, we avoided it as much as possible by giving them their midday meal at school It was no light task filling forty rice-bowls

twice or thrice over, but two girls were told off at a time, and accomplished it with the supervision of the school amah It was wonderful during that period at what little cost it was done, and gratifying to hear of the girls saying how much more they enjoyed that meal than any they had at home!

I had only one rule in the school Every mother who came to ask permission for her daughter to attend received the same answer, whether Christian or non Christian

"Yes, certainly, but you know the condition I cannot take any girl whose feet are bound"

The promise to send the girl with "heavenly" or unbound feet was readily given One or two of the girls had pastors for their fathers who were in full sympathy with the anti foot-binding movement, then in its unpopular infancy One of the girls would sometimes come to my side

"Precious Pearl and True Cloud have their feet bound again," they would whisper I would nod in silent acquiescence, not being sure whether I ought to rebuke them for telling tales in school But too much was at stake, and presently I would retire into an outer room, taking Precious Pearl with me I would speak as kindly as I knew how

"I hear you have your feet rebound and you know it is not allowed I want you to take off your bandages and give them to me"

Off would come the yard-long narrow strips, and I never gave them back Indeed, I made quite a collection, till they ceased to supply Yet even the daughter of a "reformer" rebelled at our ruling!

"True Cloud," said the girl's mother, "herself insists on her feet being bound When I refuse to do it, telling her that her father would be against it, the child retires with angry tears into a corner, and with pieces of cotton tries to bind her own feet!"

"Oh, why?" I asked

"Because one morning, coming to school, she heard the workmen on their benches calling to each other, 'There goes a girl with her mother's face and her father's feet'" Verily the supply of bound feet had been in exact ratio to the demand from the men, at whose doors, therefore, the sin of foot binding rightly lies!

Afternoon school ended, the girls on fine days were invited to come out on to our green lawn, and there disport themselves in all sorts of lively games If you had seen them as they gambolled about me, or if you could have peeped at them playing long-legged stork, catch-who can, oranges and lemons, fox and geese, or exerting all their strength and tumbling over each other at tug of-war, you would realize, as I think they did finally, the beauty and value of "heavenly" feet So great was their enthusiasm that one day, on going out to give an eye to them, I found they had enticed our great hearted doctor to join the merry crowd There he stood, arms outstretched Each hand was firmly grasped by a girl who, with the aid of a long tail of companions, was struggling against the united force on the opposing side to pull him over the line! More than once, when I went out to demand less noise, I remained to play, and to hide my diminished head, for if the doctor could withstand their efforts to pull him over the white chalked line, it was more than I could do It was Da-ling, who visited us from England for a couple of years, who instituted these games When she joined in their singing, too, they learnt what life could really hold of youthful vim and gladness They had to be driven away to their uninteresting dwellings

It pleased me to think we were making history in those early endeavours I magnified my office

"Once a girl has learned," said I, 'to read and write and say 'Our Father,' she surely will never be content unless her girls and boys can do as much, or more"

She too, who had had the full use of her feet was never going to submit her daughter's pretty little ones to be painfully crippled for life She who had romped and skipped up and down our lawn for *joie de vivre* could never quite forget the zest of it Never, while the world stands, would she cease to demand as much for her children As if in comment, this last year the women of Hupeh, in Central China, issued a public declaration 'No longer will we submit to oppression," it runs I make no comment, only smile

But the objective I took most seriously to heart was the conducting each week of two women's classes besides which the school was child's play One assemblage was held in the girls'

leader, whose fatal solitary lapse into anger appealed to them. Had they not always been taught that Anger is a sin, and not merely a slight failing?

It was the women of these two classes who contributed half the expense of sending Mrs. Ling and her companion into the country. She was their messenger rather than mine.

A man once presented himself at one of these assemblies with a live duck for sale. Every enticement to buy left me cold.

"But," he finally urged, "it is seven years old, and therefore extremely nourishing!"

It never nourished me, to my knowledge.

I did not fail to present myself at the appointed time, unless illness or absence prevented. Then I would send an accredited substitute: perhaps a spirited or a favourite pastor in from the country, and to them doubtless a welcome change. For six years I filled my empty hands, and not unhappily, by working away at school and class. It is not a bad way to pass the time. I can recommend it to other European or American women who find themselves in Eastern lands.

CHAPTER XXIV — BY MOUNTAIN, ROAD, AND RIVER

(1)

TWENTY miles up river, Sing Su and myself! We started at ten in the morning, and breathed a sigh of relief when the scurry and hurry inseparable from any up-country journey were over At such times there would seem no end to our necessities We envied the Chinese traveller, whose abundance on these occasions consists in the fewness of his wants He sets out with his small bundle of bedding, a bag of rice, and odds and ends of *pai* or rice accompaniments, such as salted fish or salted vegetables We want our tea and coffee, bread and butter, sugar and milk, tinned meat, live chickens, books, bedding, towels, soap this host of luxuries which have with long usage become necessities

As it had rained for six months more or less, and rather more than less we had also to provide ourselves with changes of raiment in case of a drenching The heat of summer, too, was certain to be upon us before our eleven days' trip was over, and to the extent of 90 or 100 degrees in the boat We had to see that some of our thinnest clothing was put in, if life was not to become an insupportable burden

We could buy little or no food on the way Ah Djang had a busy time the previous day, baking bread, making butter—from the cream of buffalo milk—and the oatmeal biscuits which Sing Su loved Whilst he had been thus engaged, we had been busy with another kind of Leaven at our new little hall outside the West Gate of the city

Last, but not least, boatmen had to be found who were not opium smokers, if we wished to reach our destination at the appointed time For this journey Christians usually came down the forty miles from Greenfields to row, and tow, and sail us up there So we put off engaging others till the last moment, in expectation of the former suddenly appearing round the corner For once we were disappointed, with the result that on the morn of our departure our coolie the Bright One, had to rush all the way to the West Gate to try and hire other Greenfields men,

these being the only ones to be depended upon to navigate a large boat as far up the Bowl as we wished to go He returned with victory at his prow, but displeasure on his brow There are Marthas amongst the Chinese, and they are frequently of the masculine gender But most things are reversed in China! He had secured the boatmen

"But the Boy, Pearly Glory"—aged fifteen—"has been guilty of going to the boat empty handed and left me to convey all the chattels," he complained He held up a salt cellar no bigger than a thimble "See," he said with solemn visage, "he has not even taken this! Or this!" He produced a tiny milk jug

"Never mind," said I, unable to rise to the enormity of the situation, "leave it to him"

"That would never do," the Bright One firmly replied "What sort of a going into the country would it be for you without a salt cellar?" He tucked it and the jug somewhere inside his loose garments with a martyred air

Eventually we sallied forth, but not before Sing Su had greeted and collogued with people in from an island out at sea Fatigued with my labours, I went out to the boat in a sedan chair, carrying on my lap, and for Sing Su's exclusive use, Dr Giles' huge Chinese dictionary Almost as big as a pagoda, we called it mockingly our pocket edition This burden the Bright One eyed with disfavour, and suggested he should carry it

"It is no heavier than a child," I sighed He grinned and acquiesced in my keeping it, evidently deeming such burdens wholly female

At last we were under way, though not sure of reaching our destination to time, for there was a tremendous freshet in the river, and the water tore down between the banks However, from 10 A M. to 8 P M we made twenty miles, helped by a favouring wind Our wide Bowl River had overflowed its banks in parts, and we took a free passage over submerged rice-fields The day was grey The clouds rested low on the hills, which journeyed with us on both banks all the distance We were relieved there was not a glaring sun The rains had given a beautiful soft appearance to the hills, whose blended reds and

greens recalled to my feminine mind a rich shot velvet I had seen in a Shanghai shop a year previously

Men were busy in the fields as we toiled slowly onwards Some were up to the knees in mud and water, planting out the young rice in mathematically straight lines Others, again, were ploughing with an antediluvian plough and a small bullock One ploughman had an interesting attendant in the form of a heron, perfectly white except for a yellow head and a green mark down the centre of its back It strutted gravely in front of the man At one part a long sandy reach tempted us to disembark and stretch our limbs, but after walking quite a distance, we found it was easier to alight than to re-embark We had both to be carried through mud and water on the shoulders of a boatman This excited nobody to laughter except myself The others had seen it too often At dusk our boatman gave the signal for lowering the anchor

"Very well," said Sing Su, 'but remember we must surely be at Greenfields by to-morrow noon'

As everybody knew this was impossible if they finished work for the day at this stage, they took the hint They cooked some rice to cheer their drooping spirits after a hard day's toil, and then went on till 8 P M, to an anchorage where we rested for the night Next day, Saturday, our men noisily cooked their rice at 'daybreak"

'Daybreak is seemingly at 2 A M,' said Sing Su grumpily to my inquiries as to the time

They rowed on till eight, when we stopped for breakfast This Sing Su and I took on the bank, out of consideration for my boat squeamishness for Chinese boatmen rock and roll their boats the whole journey, and attempt no sort of smooth passage It could not be called a comfortable meal. Our table was at an angle, the bank was exceedingly wet and slippery, yet it was a great relief to be once more on terra firma, or some approach to it Of course a group of women soon gathered, and a red letter day it was to them seeing our very simple table spread One little girl, who stood close by, was just healing up after smallpox We had to hasten away, but, you may be sure, not before inviting them to go to So-bu—Sand stage—next day to hear some Interesting News

At one place the men climbed out to tow the boat, four of them, including Pearly Glory Great fun it was at first to watch them laughingly slip and slide along the sandy slope, but Pearly Glory had to be warned to keep some of his strength for the fourteen mile hard walk he had still in store that day We reached the city, Greenfields, by half-past one, after a terrible amount of labour towing, pushing, poling, against a fierce current and rapids We saw two men pulling at the tow line of another boat, and though they were straining every muscle and had their heads bent almost to the ground, they could scarcely move the boat a foot We had a better breeze than the previous day, or our journey would not have been completed in time for us to set out for the ultimate destination, which was a village called Great Pass-Behind We spent half an hour at Greenfields talking to the faithful about a Christian who had been beaten almost to death recently in an ancestral temple

Early in the afternoon, fearing rain, we set out, knowing the journey would take till long after dark The rain started soon after ourselves, and poured down the greater half of the way We arrived wet through, but thankful that neither had the river drowned us nor the precipices engulfed us, for this journey to Great-Pass-Behind is one of the most impressive in our neighbourhood, and I never weary thinking of it After leaving the boat, we at once began to ascend the first *ling*, or "pass"—mostly by steps When we consulted our aneroid at the top, we found we had left the river and the city on its further bank six hundred feet below At the head of the pass stands a heavy stone gateway, built for defence during the rebellion of forty years earlier, when the Taipings swarmed over this part of the country but were ultimately subdued with substantial help from General Gordon On and up we mounted, over five great passes, one after the other, until we reached a height of 2359 feet above the river A region of towering hills lay about us, countless, billowing like the waves of the sea, but more beautiful because of their infinite variety in form and colour

Then began the descent, mostly by paths little better than ledges cut round the hills; often dangerous The breaking of a chair pole or of a cord, the slip of a foot, must have precipitated us hundreds of feet, and dashed us to pieces At one spot



Song Su-in has mount un chair carried by his sturdy bearers

the path was so narrow and broken down that I begged my bearers to let me walk over it They insisted on carrying me over I called to Sing Su, heavier than myself, to walk this part, which advice he of course disregarded Looking back in fear, I saw one of his bearers slip at the crucial part, and instinctively I let forth a terrified cry which was also disregarded

It was a relief to reach our stopping place as usual, the last house in the village But we received a hearty welcome to the farmer's dim residence A mud floor, so saturated with wet as to be slippery, was our portion, but it was their best, and soon we had changed our sopping garments and were at supper and remarkably cheerful After a little service, greatly desired by the people, there was bed for me But Sing Su was held in talk and consultation till a late hour Seeing he could only visit this out-of the way station twice a year, there were arrears to be made up and inquiries as to the progress made The Christians too were glad of the chance to pour forth their forebodings into a sympathetic ear Their enemies were breathing out threatenings and forging their thunderbolts in expectation of scattering the little flock and reducing them to the condition of social outcasts

On Sunday the country people wakened us at the hour, luxuriously late for them of 6 A M Busy sounds of life were around us In the adjoining room a young boy had evidently been told off to amuse the baby Most efficiently he performed this time honoured office, but with considerably more expenditure of lung power than seemed necessary to us, for only a thin wooden partition separated us from him Christians were singing hymns in different detachments and in different gamuts too Not one of the tunes could we recognize, though they had learnt them from us The key was always minor, and more in the style of a dirge than a joyful lay

We dressed under difficulties No sooner did we open a window—that is a wooden shutter, for glass had not yet found its way to Chinese homes—to permit of our finding our garments than the aperture was immediately filled with a dozen pair of eyes—men women and children s The only way was to collect our clothes shut the shutter, then scramble into them under the protection of darkness We opened the shutter again

while washing our faces and combing our hair, so as to satisfy curiosity within limits The Bright One brought us breakfast, and immediately after we went into the large house place, where services are held It was already filled with sound as well as people, each man bawling his loudest The house place is the principal room, and in this case was long and low The various sleeping rooms were ranged down the length of one side, being partitioned off with rough unpainted woodwork With the exception of a corner at one end, which was partly boarded off as a kitchen, the entire side opposite was open to the dripping hill against which it was built This arrangement gave the inmates any advantages to be derived from free admission of wind and weather

There is very little in common between a Western and a Chinese *oh tser ka*, or kitchen Here there was no chimney, so, during the cooking all the smoke from the dried grass and wood used as fuel escaped into the house This accounts for many of the sore eyes and much of the grime and cobweb which have become second nature and hardly noticeable The cooking-stove was a structure of brick, with a big shallow iron pan fixed in the top for the boiling of rice, underneath was an aperture for the fire, which is made of dried grass and brushwood cut from the hillsides in the dry autumn weather The goodwife's kitchen bellows amused me greatly When she wished to fan the embers to a flame, she took a hollow bamboo stick inserted one end in the stove and the other in her mouth, and blew

But there is always much sickness among these poor people This their foreign friend, Sing Su, found once again when he dispensed medicines after the service at the modest charge of ten cash, or a halfpenny a patient!

In spite of continued wet there was a fine congregation of sixty The text was 'My peace I leave with you' and the subject the kind of peace which could be given by a Man on the eve of crucifixion Very attentive were those country folk, a large number standing through the service, and seventeen of them partook of the Bread and Wine at the end But in China children too often are quite unchecked No attempt was made to keep the children here in order, and half my time was spent in trying to subdue a lively youth of four, who answered to the

the curve of the hills. A rushing torrent, breaking now and again into cascades, and fed by streams from the almost perpendicular hills, filled the bed of the canyon Lovely white flowers, wild gardenia, huge dog-rose, and jasmine there wasted their sweetness, in the companionship of delicate ferns and maidenhair. We ascended a considerable height, but had a still deeper descent on the other side. So precipitous was it that we literally could not see our way for more than a dozen yards at a time, and often less. It was all I could do to avoid slipping out of my chair Down, down, well-nigh straight down, with truly a curious sight on either side. In close proximity there were, not the hanging gardens of Babylon, but *the hanging rice-fields of China With infinite patience, immense* labour, thousands of little terraces had been built up and carved out of the solid hill, each one carefully prepared by the husbandman, then inundated, and now waiting for the young rice-plants.

Though Sing Su and I were the first foreigners who had ever been to Summerfield, the villagers were remarkably courteous Few followed us to our goal, the small homestead perched on the very edge of the hill, difficult of access. The low cottage had but a few yards of standing-room in front, and of this no small share on either side the door was monopolized by what in China is tantamount to the ashpit in the West. On our way we had heard glowing accounts of the great efforts and remarkable provision made for our accommodation. I shall not be far from the truth if I say we slept in company with the pigs, for our bed was divided from them by a boarding over which we could peep, and which did not reach the low ceiling. The two families of porkers might as well have been in the same room with us. Every snore and every movement was heard, and one must admit that the smell of pork is more agreeable roasted than raw. This chamber at Summerfield had also the further distinction of a large and damp rock which jutted out of the mud floor. But we had been more provident than the Patriarch Jacob: we had brought pillows with us.

The house-place, where we attempted to eat our meal, was a mass of closely packed faces all about us Fortunately we were invited to the house below to hold service, and there a quiet

attentive audience listened while Sing Su held forth twice over by request Afterwards we came back to the now quiet hill where eight candidates for entrance into the church were examined and approved One of these was a bright faced old lady Though seventy six she had walked two hard miles to service and had the honour of being the first of her gender to accept the New Doctrine in that locality! About ten o clock for the first time the Sacrament was celebrated in this weird outlandish spot and was most solemnly partaken of by the light of the lantern we had brought with us Shadows lay thick about the little room I near the door could see the dark black wall of hills facing us on the opposite side and catch the gleam of water in the narrow valley between hundreds of feet below" Then the little company dispersed each bearing his long strip of flaming bamboo as torch without which it were dangerous to life to stir a step in the dark

So the long day ended It had held three services two Communions eight baptisms forty or fifty patients a visit to a local mandarin—after the morning service at Great Pass Behind and six miles hard travel much of it on foot

(iii)

On Monday we were wakened at five Our alarum was the near cry of a pheasant and before seven we had left our high perched eyrie though not before Sing Su had given medicine to a score of people These knew the practice if not the proverb of the early bird catching the worm!

From then till two in the afternoon we passed rapidly through another portion of this vast region of ten thousand hills and valleys the beauty of whose ravines and gorges no feeble words of mine shall defame After the long rains nature was particularly verdant The heavens were a canopy of blue save for a few fleecy clouds which still resisted the rays of the increasingly hot sun To the two of us denizens of a malodorous insanitary city no small part of the charm lay in the pure illimitable breathing space and in the spirit of all pervading peace and restfulness Gradually the discordant notes in our hearts were toned to silence into unconscious harmony with our sur

roundings Here it were easy indeed to cease from man for as far as the East is from the West, so far seemed city dirt, strife, and squalor We were alone, save for our bearers, amid a vast solitude, a world within a world Every turn of the path revealed fresh ranges and yet deeper valleys—all, until now, untrodden by " barbarian " feet Numberless rills streamed down the mountain sides and formed themselves into a torrent whose voice, as we passed by, was more resonant than our own Yet once and again a note was struck which instantly carried me away to an English wood it was the voice of the cuckoo

The Chinese have their own legend of the cuckoo In ages long gone by a certain farmer neglected the call of spring in his fields When he sowed, it was too late The winter came and found him foodless He paid the penalty of his idleness and died of hunger As a warning to others the gods transformed him into a cuckoo, and now he and his descendants must for ever cry to the laggard farmer, " *Kue kung! Kue kung! Kue-kung!* Work on! Work on! Work on!"

At times we were at giddy heights I learned how hardened one may become, even to the extent of riding for half a day on the outside edge of precipices in a chair slung between two bamboo poles, with the additional excitement of being suspended over an abyss at every corner we turned Our last descent must have been two thousand feet Here and there the path twisted like a corkscrew, placing me at an angle of forty five degrees in my chair We wound too much to have a view of the bottom from the summit, but when it came into sight, it was of a frightening depth below At one spot stood a fine fir tree more than half burnt through, to extract the resin The tree seemed no worse for the cutting It would not die, we were told, though it would never refill the sad wound in its trunk

Before leaving Summerfield Sing Su had astonished its inhabitants by his method of shaving which had to be performed in the open

" He rubs over his face a little silver brush, and it is done in a moment!" said they to the belated visitors The little silver brush was a safety razor, a boon in such circumstances

As we swung down the hill I walked beside my chair

"You have followed our custom, and plaited your hair into a pigtail," remarked one bearer approvingly "It is much cooler done into a knot behind too, as you have it, we know that!"

At two in the afternoon we reached Little Creek, where we were disappointed not to find our boat waiting We were to learn the reason later The inhabitants were greatly exercised in mind as to our appearance, and crowded round to suffocation

'Do you ever comb your hair?" they wanted to know of me Did I do this, did I do that? All of which was very fatiguing after travelling over precipices without food for seven hours We escaped down the bank, and sat roasting in the sun for an hour while a boat was being bargained for to row us down-stream till we came across our own missing craft

This Little Creek is as big as many an English so-called river, and about seventy miles long From the point where we joined it to its entry into the Bowl River it is one succession of rapids with waves that bubble and boil like a cauldron and down which we shot in fine style In an hour we came across our own boat, and learned that the little dog which we had left behind in it when we struck inland to Great-Pass-Behind was the cause of delay Some miles below he had jumped ashore and refused to return Instead he had started off up the nearest hill, in the hope they surmised of finding his master and mistress, who had disappeared in similar fashion

This was distressing Arabi or "Habbie" had trotted at our heels for ten long years He had been the children's playmate, which made intolerable the prospect of his dying slowly of starvation on the lonely hills in his old age We set off at once in search and came to a standstill at the village where Habbie had begun his vain quest, and the whole population turned out to tell how they had pursued him far up the hills Doubtless their noisy shouts had also served to send him further afield We decided to go after him no light task after the toil we had already undergone, and with a hot sun shining The climb was long and steep When we came to a very stiff piece of ground Sing Su threw himself down

'I can go no further,' he said 'It is hopeless He has gone on and on If he had been anywhere near he would have come at the sound of my whistle

But I, who had not been holding forth from morning till night the previous day, could not yet give up hope I toiled upwards, with Pearly Glory as comrade, and pitying the Chinese peasants who came so high and far to cultivate small patches of soil On reaching one summit, we found there were higher heights beyond, but also faint traces of our unlucky beastie

"We will go down that hillside and on to the other hill, and if he is not there, we must return," quoth I to Pearly Glory But even there we found him not

"We shall have to give him up," remarked Pearly Glory, and at last I assented We tried to console ourselves by lingering and we filled our pockets with a large and delicious wild raspberry called *gung gung*, which grew profusely

Before retracing our steps came one last effort The Chinese hills resounded to my unfamiliar voice uttering piercing cries upon the strange name of an adventurer in Egypt, 'Arabi!' Was that a faint response? Again I called and yet again and then felt sure a distant answer came faintly from below 'It is he!" I cried, and soon there was no mistaking the quick short bark of recognition In a few minutes our old friend was tearing madly up, over all obstacles And what the joy of mistress and dog I leave you to imagine It was a triumphant, smiling trio that raced wildly back, fatigue forgotten, to the boat, Habbie with an air of "I knew I could find them" in every wag of his little tail

What did the villagers think of all this pother? Was it much ado about only an animal? Their own dogs are often parials starved neglected, unsightly from sores the very opposite of the famous pugs of Peking—in which city, incidentally, one sees but few pugs Tales of the diabolical cruelty of Western folk are still widely circulated in China, but surely these villagers, who again turned out *en masse* to congratulate us on the success of our efforts, would credit us with some human feeling If I, a tired woman, would walk ten miles over hill paths to find my little old dog would they not bethink them that perhaps the Good Shepherd of whom Sing Su told them might truly be seeking His lambs even ten thousand miles?

(iv)

The following morning we went ashore and visited three villages In two of them we had a cordial reception, but the third was decidedly cool, the principal people being scholars and proud Confucianists Still, even these condescended to gather in the public rest house and listen awhile to the presumptuous foreigner in a casual stand off manner At another place we had an invitation to call at the house of a woman who had heard of the Gift to mankind at Great-Road, a distant station Under the spreading chestnut tree at her door, which sheltered both the crowd and ourselves from the heat, Sing Su spoke

In the afternoon we dropped down the Creek to a large village called Zang chang, and here Sing Su and his assistants were so willingly listened to that they went again in the evening At dusk the owner of the house where they were to speak came to me

"The people are very quiet and tranquil," said he, "so will you come and talk to them too?"

Accordingly at dark we set out, lantern in hand, over the pebbly beach, into the village A crowd followed close at our heels, and a pushing, crushing, jostling, swaying, living mass it was for the two speakers to confront It is not pleasant to rub shoulders and come into close contact with diseased, dirty persons Some of our hearers looked as if they had never washed since birth They were determined, too, to have a close look at that curiosity, a foreign woman if supreme effort could attain it They came peering closely into my face, and did not hesitate to turn on it the full glare of their lanterns or the gleam of their blazing bamboo sticks They also fingered my garments, but when their insatiate curiosity led them to greater intimacies, I had to make gestures of unmistakable protest

If I seem to dally long over these country places we visited, or give many details, let me hide behind the fact that on this trip I penetrated further into the hinterland than I had ever done before, or did again As yet we had no station up the Creek whose clear green waters contrasted so favourably with the muddy River Bowl But after this we hoped soon to have

one at Zang-chang, where I thus had watched a handful of the folk first become interested Whilst Sing Su was speaking that night one man burst out

"But *how* are we to worship God?" he said, then coloured up and looked round to see if any were looking at him for putting a silly question

After the tumult it was delicious to go back and sit on the boat in the darkness and, in almost perfect stillness to watch the stars shine out in their clear splendour It spoke well for the people of Zang chang that next day, with Habbie as my only companion I was able to take a long walk along the high bank of the Creek

(v)

Between Zang chang and Zie yue, or Upper Bank, we shot two rapids On approaching a rapid, the boatmen rowed with might and main, as a boat answers more readily to the helm when going fast Below these rapids the water was as placid as a mill stream, and on its calm surface floated a fleet of small boats, whose snowy sails looked like bright wings in the sunlight

At Zang chang we had hoped to find a messenger from the city with fresh bread and our letters Not a trace of him! So after leaving explicit directions as to where we might be found by him we passed from the Creek to the Bowl River, up which we travelled In the afternoon whom should we see marching ahead instead of after us, but our man? We joyfully hailed him and were speedily feasting on news from a far country as well as on the fresh bread sent on by our doctor's wife which replaced our now mouldy crusts

As we toiled slowly up-stream we greeted various villages but the people were too busy in their fields to reciprocate One village reminded me of early English streets, so narrow were the tunnels between the houses that one could have shaken hands from opposite dwellings It was the dustiest place also which I ever was in for one man had monopolized the main street with his threshing arrangements The dust he evoked blinded and choked us intolerably His method was simplicity itself All he used was a large tub two thirds of which was

encircled by a high stiff mat The thresher, taking in his arms a bundle of wheat, stood at the aperture and beat the wheat against a species of washing-board placed in the tub The grain dropped into the tub, the straw remained in his hands, also the dust—on this occasion filling the air Speech was impossible

On Thursday morning we left the boat for a village where Sing Su talked to the men and I to the women Thence we sent the boat ahead, and set out to walk to Zih Mang Dong, or Stone-Door-Cave, a place of beauty on the river, though few foreigners had been up so far

"It is just here," said one man of whom we inquired the distance

"It is a rough road, only fit for Greenfield men!" said another scornfully

Once or twice the path failed altogether, and we presently realized we must either make one over the face of the rock or go back the latter an unhappy prospect under the burning sun Several risky places I accomplished safely by sitting down and shuffling along a few inches at a time, clinging with hands and feet to the few inequalities of the rock Habbie looked on with disapproval, and was an added danger, for he insisted on coming to my rescue, although finally even he had to be helped forward gently by his master's foot By the time we reached the highest point, I was ready to expire with exhaustion We then passed through a narrow opening between the hills and lo! there was the famous Stone-Door Cave below, on the other side

The place takes its name from the high bold rocks which stand sentinel at its entrance from the river Inside, the word 'cave' seems unsuitable as a large amphitheatre extending a quarter of a mile gradually opens to view It is a very lovely spot, being completely enclosed by high hills and towering rocks which vary in form A few ardent scholars value its seclusion and come to the temple in this quiet nook for undisturbed study There was no lack of gods to whom they might appeal I counted thirty six Buddhist divinities ranged round the temple But the chief attraction of Stone Door Cave is a fine waterfall which leaps some hundreds of feet down the bare rock into a large and beautiful green pool There was little enough water

then, but this was atoned for by the exquisite forms into which the water broke, shooting down like Roman candles reversed. The grand mass of shelving rock at the side, on which are inscribed ancient characters, provided us with a refreshingly cold resting-place after our hot walk, and the canopy of rock overhead shielded us from the persistent sun. Our hearts sang the "Gloria in Excelsis" for such loveliness.

The same afternoon we proceeded towards the next county, intending to visit its chief city, Chuchow, which is a hundred miles from the City-of-the-South. At dusk we took aboard two extra men, fearing the effects of the heavy work on our boatman, who was not strong. That night we came on a bad rapid. Four men were tracking, and strange creatures they looked as they crawled with their rope harness in the moonlight pulling the boat. Other three men were in the water, literally pushing the boat along. Yet we scarcely seemed to move, though the long tow-line was strained almost to breaking. Time, much shouting, and patient work at length brought us into calmer water, to every one's relief. Pearly Glory enjoyed this kind of existence. He trekked, rowed, poled, and pushed with great gusto, being oftener in the water than out. He could swim too, though the Chinese method of lifting the heels out of the water at each stroke seems a waste of energy. It is more like treading water. We reached Chuchow with no more incident than having to send him back for the indispensable tea, which he had carelessly left in a small boat occupied by the colporteur.

At four in the afternoon we emerged from the hills and entered on a large plain, and were told this was Chuchow. Landing at the cluster of houses on the bank, we set out to find the residence of the German missionaries there.

"Go straight on for a mile," one native of the place directed us.

Our respect for Chuchow did not rise. It appeared a feeble village, and soon we were in the open country again, where, in a large pond, I saw water-lilies apparently growing wild. But I am not sure these were not being cultivated for their seeds, which are stewed with much sugar as food. We trudged a couple of miles further, when the walls of a city sprang into sight! Inside the gates, we walked for another mile along the

main streets of a busy city whose size was an agreeable disappointment. But by the time we reached the Germans' house, we had had enough. They treated us most kindly, and the sincerity of their welcome was manifest, for we were the first Europeans they had seen for many a long day. It was in this city that lived Eldred Sayers, whose death I chronicled earlier, and it was here the Germans were attacked and badly treated, of which I have told in connection with a Chinese feast at the White House.

We returned to our boat at half-past nine ready for sleep. The boat was to start at daylight, as it would take all Saturday to reach Greenfields, sixty miles off. But how different going down-river from coming up! Spite of a head wind, we floated easily down, and could always tell when we were arriving at a *tah* or rapid by the sound of rushing water. We reached Stone-Door-Cave by noon, and ate tiffin under the waterfall, enjoying the currents of cool air it generated. At five we stopped at a village and had good fortune, for two or three old men were sitting at the front of their houses and politely invited us to join them. Soon there was a crowd of men, women, and children. Of course there was plenty of noise at first, of crushing and pushing to see me; but when they were asked, they became quiet and listened with eager eyes and gestures of assent. Chinese always listen more attentively when a foreigner is speaking than to a compatriot. Sing Su, when speaking to a purely non-Christian audience, would probably begin somewhat after this fashion, like St. Paul:

"Your own common sayings tell you that life is from Heaven; certainly not from the idols. You trust Heaven for food, not the idols. Conscience is Heaven-begotten: your peace and happiness are Heaven-bestowed, and cannot be therefore obtained by worshipping idols. The best wish your language can give to a man in regard to a future life is that he may return to Heaven. Why, then, worship these gods of clay made by men's hands, and forget altogether the Creator of Heaven and earth, your Heavenly Father?

"We have come to call you back to Him: for He loves you with abundant love. Think, if your own son were to forget and neglect you, and refuse to acknowledge and obey you, would

you be happy? Would you not be sorrowful, perhaps angry? And can God, the Father in Heaven, be happy while seeing you wander so far from Him? He wants you for your own sake to come back"

Then perhaps would come the story of the Prodigal Son, and their own lives would be shown in the light of this parable A short prayer to teach them how to pray would close the address

The people gave heed Among them were many pleasant-featured women, who returned my smiles and greetings with interest

We spent a very uncomfortable night close to Greenfields city, the lofty grass-grown walls of which form the river bank It was hot and close, the mosquitoes were lively The storm broke between four and five on the Sunday morning, and the Great Rain, as the Chinese call our heaviest rain, came thundering upon the leaf made cover of our boat To keep the wet from saturating our heads and pillows we had to close the door This made the atmosphere of our little enclosure so horribly depressing that I had to beg for breakfast early to endure it

For morning service we went into the city, to the Ancestral Hall We had rented the building for some time, but the owner refused to let it to us any longer

"You have taken away our luck!" he complained "Hitherto students from our classes have been successful at the examinations The wooden tablet put in this prominent place assures you of that But since the Hall has been let to the Jesus Teaching we have had nothing but failures! Perhaps success will return when you leave it"

One wonders if it did adding a semblance of truth to their superstition Many such notions have had to be lived down in China

We feared the downpour would spoil the morning congregation, but it did not Some of the earnest faces pleased me very much Only one saddened us, that of Teh u, the pastor, who was so thin and haggard we felt he was not long for earth, and indeed a few months later he died Our hearts grew heavy at the thought of losing another of our valued and valuable pastors true shepherds of their sheep He was a fine man, this Mr Chang of Greenfields Before the service, when three were

admitted to the church, while Sing Su was encouraging the Christians to endure persecution, pointing out how much easier it was here than in many places, Teh u stood in the middle of the floor

"Yes!" he said "Some of the Christians are like Peter They can't stand even the pointing of a finger at them!"

We went to see the house to which the services would shortly have to be removed The difficulty of finding a settled place was great in those earlier days in China, and we had been in five places already in Greenfields city! No sooner were we settled in one than we were turned out, on one pretext or another The tenure of this next one was also uncertain Some of the Christians were anxious to save further disturbance by building for themselves; and thought they could raise a hundred dollars But this was far too small a sum with which to start a building which would cost five hundred dollars—or fifty pounds A year or two later, however, an attractive church was built, on high ground designedly When a terrible flood overwhelmed the city, sweeping most of the houses down the river, this building stood firm The then pastor and his family were rescued by boat from the roof of his house—their last refuge from the flood

The moist heat had robbed me of all my strength, and I was too exhausted to go to afternoon service I sent Sing Su some tea from the boat, to help through the giving of medicine to a crowd of patients when the service was over Following that came a long talk in the boat itself with three earnest and good men, to whom Sing Su gave words of advice and courage, to which it was good for me also to listen Then we parted

'*Tse what, tse what*—good bye, good bye' they reiterated. We stood outside to see the last of them to catch the freshening breeze, and to pay a tribute of admiration to our surroundings Soon the little city, built on the bank of the broad river, with its four or five quaint arched gateways leading up by steps through the city wall, was left behind Next the tall white pagoda, keeping silent but ceaseless guard from a high hill a little below over the city's fortunes also passed from view Once more we were amongst the lonely hills, with their magnificent rocks whose pinks and greys at this sunset hour no painter's brush could have exaggerated

We floated down-river during the night, reached the City-of-the-South on Monday, and slipped quietly through the back streets to hide our disreputable appearance. Then for the White House in Tile Market Street. Our eleven days' trip had come to an end, during which time I had never once looked into a mirror! We had travelled nearly three hundred miles, by row-boat, in sedan-chairs, on foot, and taking it all in all had had a very enjoyable time, and with never an unkind word. We had climbed hills of no mean height till exhausted, and had shot rapids. Such slight drawbacks as boat-sickness, being drenched with rain one day and sun-baked the next, sleeping alongside pigs, were now almost forgotten details: crumpled rose-leaves.

Good seed had been scattered where it had never before been sown. For it there is always good soil.



Photo by G. Watson, H.B.M. Colonial Service

The Village Matriarch
She wields a good deal of authority, and it is well to have her on your side in a dispute

equally present with myself As there were no means of fastening it, when I desired solitude I strategically placed my chair between it and the table, blocking ingress But such precautions were of small avail Ultimately not even my bedclothes escaped the familiar, and by no means lately washed, touch of my Celestial country friends The youngest, equally with the eldest, felt at liberty to pull my watch-chain, or test the quality of my garments It was only after gratifying them to a very liberal extent that I put up an unwritten notice board that trespassers were undesired by me I was grateful that my room was not on the ground floor, or the continuous uproar of innumerable babies would have deafened me I was fortunate, too, that the exigencies of my case did not compel my host to place me in the kitchen, for the smoke from the burning brushwood would have called for something bigger than bottles to hold my tears

I asked myself if the original Prophet's Chamber were anything like mine Was it as airy? Was it as unswept? Was he an aesthetic? Men seldom are All the paint my woodwork knew was the grime and dust of ages, all the cleansing it received was from the touch of passing palms It was hopeless, in such an abode, to think of cleaning But prophets are not recorded as fastidious In far off England farmhouses are proverbial for their immaculate cleanliness but as might be expected here the order was reversed Not one clean spot could be found, though I sought diligently Small wonder, seeing that the main portion of the *lao*, or "upstairs," of a Chinese farmstead is the storehouse for the year's fuel Dried grass, roots brushwood, the loppings of trees are heaped in confusion all around it, having their inseparable concomitants dust and dirt It would be food for the mind, thought I, to see a relentless Yorkshire housewife set to work to cleanse the Augean stable outside my door Her burning desire would be to throw all such rubbish into the fire—which is the Celestial's too, but their methods differ She would make one large holocaust and have finished with it He prefers to make a small one thrice daily, when he cooks his dearly loved rice with it Ample illustration there was of certain words about the lilies of the field and the grass 'which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the

oven" Beautiful azaleas and lilies gave me a pang as they lay withered among the firing

Close to my window stood a clump of many varied trees Most of them had been so shorn of their branches, to keep the pot a-boiling, that only the slender trunks and a top-knot of leaves remained There was bitter-oak, the pale green of whose fresh buds was in vivid contrast with the dead green of the old Straight as a die stood the coir palm with its crown of fan like leaves, beneath which dropped gracefully bunches of yellow seed-like flowers Scotch firs, bamboos, maples, and others whose name I did not know, were grouped in masses And though my outlook was not extensive, it included fields in which I recognized wheat, bearded barley, peas in flower, and uncounted numbers of empty patches flooded with water, awaiting the young rice which would shortly be planted therein

More numerous than any, however, were the poppy fields, at that moment surpassingly lovely As I gazed and gazed in admiration at the serried ranks of tall straight plants standing like a regiment of soldiers, each in his gay pinky purple cap, I found it hard to realize that from those gorgeous flowers was distilled such deadly poison for the destruction of deluded people Sad it is that the Chinese, who during the closing years of the Monarchy were making a strong effort to free their country from *this reproach, have now under the Republic again bowed their* necks to the terrible yoke of opium

With a laudable desire to show me the choicest wonder of their neighbourhood, my friend who had vaulted so lightly over the coffin, took me to a spot a couple of miles away There, hidden deep in the bosom of the hills, is a magnificent piece of "white water," which pours over a perpendicular piece of black rock for nobody knows how many hundreds of feet, and breaks at the bottom into miniature cascades I was the first Western woman to behold it On every hand green precipitous mountain sides encircle the fall, and then rise sharp into the heavens, as if Nature had conspired to enclose one jewel for her own private adornment I viewed it in awe, and from a respectful distance The gorge was too steep and dangerous to venture down Indeed in the abyss was left small standing-room for man, and from above, the narrow defile appeared to be com-

pletely filled by the serpentine torrent. Here was one of earth's colossal solitudes, and the silence surrounded us.

"Surely," I murmured, "this is too inaccessible a place for human habitation."

But is any spot in China exempt from man's possible labour? I discerned, perched away on the verge of the abyss, on the opposite bank, the tiny tell-tale patch of cultivated soil, with its accompanying hut!

Be it so. Yet surely that old serpent, the devil, can never have won entrance into so cloistered a precinct? Alas for human pretensions! My garrulous friend scattered any such foolish hope. He gave me a graphic account of a tragedy enacted there not six months earlier.

"There were two brothers," said he, "both Christians, and they lived in that hut. The elder had a wife, but no child. Theirs was a hard life. The soil produces only sweet potatoes, and they had but little to help this food down their throats."

Their dwelling had but a thatched roof and a mud floor. Life therein indeed might be the acme of dreariness to one who knew nothing of Divine consolation. The brothers had at least that comfort; but the woman drank only of the bitter waters of Marah. Realizing that her husband could provide nothing better, she fell into evil ways. Finally she insisted that he should "marry" her to a distant place, thereby making some money for himself and enabling her to enjoy the flesh-pots of Egypt. He, a quiet inoffensive man, stoutly refused to entertain the idea. Thereupon she, and her own brother, who also hoped to profit by the remarriage, decided to kill him, and in such a way as to lead people to think he had committed suicide.

One night, having strangled him, her brother carried the body off on his back and fastened it to a tree at a distance. The dead man's brother, who lived next door, was awakened in the dead of night by the final scuffling. When he went in, after lighting his candle, he found no one but his sister-in-law.

"My husband struck me, and then went out," said she.

High and low they sought him; but it was not till a fortnight later that his body was found, his poor harassed soul having gone to God by the cruel hand of his wife and brother-in-law. The magistrate came, viewed the body, decided he had been murdered,

and ordered the wife into custody where she was at that very time that I was admiring the glen Her brother was still at large

Nor could I console myself that at least blameless sorrow was excluded from this heavenly spot Almost in the same breath my voluble one hastened to picture how, quite recently also, a firewood gatherer standing in a perilous position on the further bank missed his footing and fell headlong

"Was he killed?" I queried

"How could he be otherwise?" was the brief reply

It was with chastened thoughts that I went back up the steep slippery bank and round the narrow ledge which led to safety The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain—until now thought I, as we hurried back through the driving rain It was a relief to turn my back on the sombre grandeur, and to feel free to revel and rejoice again in the colours, pink, crimson, white of the azaleas which in the rich flood of spring-time turn this hill country into a veritable garden Back into my Prophet's Chamber I went and was soon warming my cold toes and drying my wet shoes by resting them on a little wicker basket containing an earthenware jar in which smouldered a handful of wood embers A poor substitute for a substantial fire but some satisfaction My garments had to take their chance of drying in the sun on the morrow

Less fortunate than myself were two young ladies who left the City of the South a few months before this occasion They had with them three respectable Chinese companions a pastor, a Biblewoman, and a servant The village of Dû kwang which they were visiting, was attacked by robbers, who did not hesitate to attack them also Indeed they began on the two Western women Afterwards it became known that the robbers had learned of their coming but saw no reason to alter any plans on their account rather were they an additional inducement, providing more loot

The young ladies were sleeping in the seclusion of a loft the entrance to which was an aperture at the top of a steep ladder Imagine their consternation when, at midnight they were awaked by a crowd of men rushing up the ladder and into their room brandishing knives and guns With no word of parley or apology such as English highwaymen were supposed to offer

their victims, the ruffians proceeded to pull the bed clothes off the two, and to do this more efficiently, they ejected them rudely on to the floor When one of the two ejaculated a word of protest, she was answered by a blow, slight, it is true, but indicative of what might happen next if she did not conform to their rule

'And yet," she told me afterwards, "somehow I was not trembling with fear, as I should have thought An inner peace kept us both in a strong serenity Strange it was"

The robbers then proceeded to take their possessions, their garments, bed clothes, books, the gold watch possessed by one of them, their food brought with them so as not to make them a burden on their host They took everything leaving them nothing save the night array in which they stood Then they decamped to raise pandemonium in the village—but not before badly wounding the host with their knives and carrying off both his sons and also the ladies servant, for future ransom

By this time the Biblewoman had appeared on the scene Fearing that the worst was yet to be, she counselled flight She led them through a trap-door into the loft of the adjoining house, down their ladder, and into the yard There, with bare feet, white ghost like figures, they climbed a wall, and made as swiftly as they could on to the rough hillside In the darkness they hid for two long hours, shivering with cold, for their flight was in wintry December, and they had not been permitted to keep two garments

The banditti looted the village from end to end The cries of the victims added to the explosions of the robbers' guns were terribly distressing and made an unforgettable impression on our refugees on the hill When a measure of quietness told them that the robbers had adjourned to the next rendezvous our friends returned to the house and waited for daylight But in what a quandary were they! They, literally had nothing to wear but their night clothes and all the clothing left in the village were the rags and tatters scorned by the robbers and mostly men s at that Needs must when the devil or a robber drives So it was in these masculine cast offs that the Western women hied themselves covertly back in a boat to their home in the city

Of course the consul had to protest vigorously against this attack on British subjects, but I doubt if the robbers were caught or brought to justice. The possible fate of their servant was what weighed on the ladies' hearts. They longed to ransom him. Yet what a direct incitement that would be to the robbers to catch another foreigner's servant! In the end he was set free, and none the worse for his weeks of duress. The owner of the watch ransomed both it and her Bible. Years later Sing Su arrived home with an interesting article: the other English Bible, which had not been offered for ransom. It had been brought to him by a Christian, who asked a dollar for the man from whom he had obtained it, and who had laid him under a strict vow never to reveal how it had come into his possession.

It would almost seem that those early evil days were better than these present evil ones. Only five years ago, 1926, we learned in Peking that the adjoining province of Shantung was so overrun with brigands that the people were driven to surround their villages with thick barbed wire to keep them out. All night long some one in the village fired off a gun at intervals, to tell the robbers that a watch was being kept and resistance would be offered.

"When wilt thou save the people?
O Lord of Mercy, when?"

(i)

CHINA is a land where some seek to earn religious merit in curious ways. In our narrow Big Street I once saw a sight that is common in Tibet, but not in China. A man was laboriously pushing himself along on all fours, with the aid, in front, of a tiny low stool on which to rest his hands. He was a priest on a pilgrimage to some distant temple.

Saloa did the same sort of thing on another kind of pilgrimage, with the further handicap of having to drag behind him the dead-weight of hopelessly diseased limbs. I cannot imagine how he accomplished the hard journey on the long mountain road from Square Hill, where he lived, to where he took boat on the Bowl for the further forty miles to the West Gate of the City-of-the-South. But to Saloa's mountain fastnesses had penetrated the report that in that city lived a man who cheerfully, and for almost nothing, cured poor sick folk of their diseases. He determined to find that man or perish in the attempt: the man being Sing Su.

The last two miles, from the West Gate to the White House, took Saloa the whole day. On hands and knees he crawled through the dirty, stony, crowded streets. So it was evening when Sing Su was called to investigate and adjudicate on the sad creature who had deposited himself on the step of our back door. What was to be done? Saloa was a leper, and his case seemed beyond hope. We then had no such thing as a hospital. Who knows that but for his piteous appeals we might never have had one?

A corner was found, and under constant treatment his symptoms abated. He became able to move about with comparative ease, helped by a stick. He remained some months, and drank in eagerly that strange doctrine of Divine love and compassion, until at length even the fashion of his countenance was changed.

Then he returned home, and henceforth our first estimate of him must change also. At one bound this poor soul became a King's ambassador. He had the honour of being the first to

bear the good tidings of great joy to his native district among the magnificent hills

"I go to Square Hill," announced Sing Su

"And I go also," I echoed With Da ling and Sea borne safe in England, I was no longer held as in a vice to the city

This expedition was a joy The sense of isolation, of being shut in from the struggling outside world, was complete A vast sea of hills surrounded us on every hand, each misty mountain like a wave amid a billowing sea Mine were the first alien feet that traversed some of the winding valleys, for while Sing Su lingered to give medicine to some who waylaid him even there, it pleased me to break new ground I wandered alone, in search of adventure I met few people The first, a sturdy young fellow, on seeing me, and too late to turn tail, came marching stolidly on, eyes fixed on the ground But when he had passed, and I turned to see what he thought of this unfamiliar sight, lo, he was flying for his life! Next, at the head of a flight of stone steps, two small barefooted firewood laddies were discerned approaching, each bearing bundles of sun dried grass bigger than themselves

"Dare they come on?" I questioned myself

One lingered for the other and then—with a courage born of companionship—they too shot past me and also took refuge in instant flight 'We have seen strange things to day, doubtless all three went home saying including a foreign devil"

For to the uninitiated countryfolk of the China of that day the foreigner certainly had something malign and devilish in his composition The women would run and hide in the corn with averted heads at our approach and the mothers would cover their children's eyes with their hands lest they receive some baneful influence

"Don t look at us!" they would implore

To return to Saloa his old symptoms all came back He came down for further treatment to our new doctor Mr Flower Once more he stayed months on the premises, bearing his testimony to the healing of his soul, as well as making himself generally useful Again he was sent off home sufficiently restored and soon after applied to join the church militant at Greenfields

When asked what evidence he could give of his fitness for this, the tears rolled down his face.

"Much! Much!" he cried. "Christ has healed me, body and soul."

Again his relentless disease reappeared, and such was its deadening effect that one day he inadvertently put his hand close to a lamp, and, before he knew, the joint of one finger was completely and painlessly burnt away. On his last visit the disease had too great a hold on him for anything but temporary relief. As he was in deep poverty, and unable to do business of any kind, some eight or ten goats were bought for him, in the hope of his therewith making a scanty but sufficient living on his native hills. But the rapidly increasing disease made the climbing after goats impossible. Wolves came—some human—and carried them away. His little stock decreased one by one. At length nothing was left but the few cash which he hoped would bring him down to the city to seek further relief from his foreign friends. After laboriously making his way to the river-bank, he hailed a passing boat, but, because his cash was insufficient, the boatman refused to take him. Nobody knows what happened then, but next day his body was taken out of the water. His spirit had fled to the land where no leprosy can come. Who can say if it was an accident, as Sing Su imperatively and absolutely asserts it was? Or, in a moment of black despair, did Saloa cry like Another, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Yet precipitately did he flee to his God?

In spite of his sickness and poverty, Saloa did work to which an angel might aspire. Therefore surely in another world than this, where values are different, Saloa will be found to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. For God called not the rich, the able, not even Sing Su or Mr. Sea or Mr. Thanks, the Englishmen, but Saloa the Chinese leper, to be the founder of the church at Square Hill, where to-day it is a centre of light in a hitherto cheerless region. There is the true ring about some of the Square Hill Christians. I myself heard one response.

"Will you still 'believe,' even if you are persecuted?" was the query.

"Believe! I shall still believe, if it means having my head cut off"—a real possibility in those days.

Is it to be wondered that the memory of this wifeless, childless man, Saloa, an epitome of woe, the embodiment of earthly misery, haunts the dim recesses of my mind like some troubled soul that will not rest till recognized and saluted? Yet it shrinks into the shadows from the coarse light of day, too pathetic a figure for human eye, too sad a fate for human pen I would fain lay Saloa's ghost May his gentle soul rest in peace!

(II)

It must surely have been amid Saloa's square-face mountains that on our journey we happened on a little family who neither ran away from us nor looked on us as "foreign devils" or "outside barbarians"

"These," announced our faithful bearer, the Buffalo, "are Christians" We could rely on him for knowing "And the right thing is to stop, make their acquaintance and, if possible, encourage them"

A sonsy matron greeted us cheerily, inviting us within The household arrangements were primitive. an earthen floor, a simple bed, a table, stools in lieu of chairs—these, with a brick stove and shallow pan for cooking the indispensable rice, summed up the furnishing We had evidently lighted on a high day, for seated at a diminutive table was a craftsman, an artist, and a relative to boot There he sat, fashioning wonderful things out of white rice dough, artistically tipping his creations with all the colours of the rainbow

"They are our yearly regulation presents for our relatives," said the dame "One is for a married daughter, for instance It is very important that the right present should be given"

Is there any nation that can surpass China in the serious matter of present-giving? On this occasion, a pair was generously set aside for us, and were later brought home in triumph —stags couchant, with blue and red antlers, having in their mouths a spray of feathery green, plucked doubtless from a particular tree That and no other tree would be right so stereotyped are the customs

It was in the late afternoon, when we sat drinking a cup of her tea—half a dozen sun-dried tea-leaves in a cup on to which

boiling water had been poured—that I gathered somewhat of the history of the occupants of that out-of-the-way homestead And of what mettle they were—especially the mother! No meek downtrodden woman she, content to do as she was bid, but a person of independent spirit She was capable, not only of striking out a path for herself, but of doing something much greater . carrying her sons with her

They had formerly lived elsewhere, and, I judge, in much better state But when the Nazarene came to the family, He was a Sword, cleaving them in twain The father, being a convinced idolater, refused to allow Christians in his household, and the defection of his wife and sons served but to increase his ardour In the end they agreed to separate, and, strange though it seems in China, the sons elected to go out with their mother They, like her, wanted to worship God in peace rather than remain under the old roof-tree with their father and his idols So the three set out to begin life anew When they came to this lonely spot in the ample bosom of those high hills there they made them a tent to dwell in by erecting a few poles, covering them with thatch and setting up a rice pan

Happy enough they seemed, going regularly to Broker's Bridge, to the church "which is in the house" there The poor woman bemoaned that of late the arduous walk had been too much for her She had partially lamed herself by falling into one of the deep rice fields close by Did I not know them too well myself? Very proud she seemed of her sons I recognized the eldest, having seen him elsewhere, a good looking youth of twenty The second boy was just entering his teens

'They are good lads" she said 'They never hesitate about doing a day's work for any one who needs it after their own sweet potato patches are tilled'

We were not the only foreign visitors she had entertained Once Mr Thanks had passed that way, and had called in, as he would say, "to hae a bit prayer' And now again that day, in the wilds of Far Cathay, Orient and Occident knelt by virtue of that very Sword which had broken down the middle wall of partition between them, yet which united them under the banner of the Prince of Peace

(III)

Mephibosheth and Saloa had much in common They were alike in that both were men of no account whatsoever Both were poor, unlettered, and neither had a leg to stand on, socially or physically Saloa was a leper, Mephibosheth was lame on both his feet from partial paralysis like the ancient man from whom I got him a name, for I have forgotten his Chinese one I *doubt if Saloa or Mephibosheth met They lived a hundred* miles apart, and in opposite directions Saloa was of the hill tops while Mephibosheth dwelt by the sea No recruiting officer would have taken either of them

In the big bay lying athwart the end of the long mountainous island of Jade Ring where Mr Summers died, is the smaller sister isle of Cross Bed It is so called, doubtless, from its appearance Here, into the teens of years ago lived Mephi bosheth It was at Rainbow Bridge that he heard the Happy Sound Doctrine, nor did he leave it behind when he returned to Cross Bed In fact, he published it aloud to such good purpose that soon thirty or forty other islanders became listeners and learners For these the Rainbow Bridge people instituted regular services

But alas the forces of reaction set themselves in battle array, anxious to conserve the territory over which they had so long held undisputed sway In his classic *Chinese Characteristics* Dr Arthur Smith graphically describes the ability of the Chinese bully to make a complete misery of the lives of those who go contrary to his wishes Now Cross-Bed possessed not one but two of these gentry Led by them, there began a persecution as persistent and aggressive as the waves which daily compass themselves together against Cross Bed Nothing would satisfy but the complete extermination of such an innovation as the *barbarians' religion*

Nor were these reactionaries without hope of success, for the love of quite a few waxed cold Physically weaker than the weakest, Mephibosheth remained unmoved, ill fitted though he seemed to be the strength of any work as he hobbled on his crutches If there is one thing more than another which causes ceaseless wonder, it is the utter inadequacy of the instruments

often used to bring to naught the things that are mighty An old blind woman in one place, a poverty-stricken leper in another, and a lame man here it is to such as these that we ourselves owed the prosperity of many a village society

Years of distress and trouble followed for the handful in Cross-Bed who, with the help of a paralysed man remained firm At length one of the bullies died leaving the more formidable still full of fight He, when he had exhausted every other source of annoyance, seized the morsel of land which was Mephibosheth's living This was the last straw, and the end of our friend's patience Burning with resentment at the accumulated persecution, he took a boat to the mainland, and from there, as on many a Communion Sunday, slowly and painfully made his way over the long miles to Rainbow Bridge. He intended to proceed thence to Clear-Music city to put in a plaint at the yamen against his foe

At Rainbow Bridge, however, he found in charge Pang-di of the elephantiasis foot Into his sympathetic ears he poured the whole story of his wrongs, and of this last attempt to deprive him of his property As we know, Pang di had himself formerly suffered grievous bodily harm because of his Christian proclivities Thus he listened with a decided fellow-feeling for Mephibosheth But he had learnt his lesson, and his judgment had become stronger than his impulses Long and earnestly did he talk to the lame man He entreated him above all to let patience have her perfect work He reminded him, too, of the uncertainty of Chinese law, and the certainty of its costliness, urging that other means might yet be tried Soothed and strengthened Mephibosheth was ultimately persuaded to return home without having taken any step against his persecutor

Not long after, the persecutor was seized with serious illness, and death stared him in the face His past life and deeds preyed upon his mind He sent for the man who had suffered most at his hands, told him how penitent he was for his misconduct, and begged him to pray with him With a warm heart Mephibosheth did so, and the man was comforted A day or two afterwards, the sick man feeling the nearness of death struggled into the courtyard He called around him his father and other relatives and neighbours

"I have done very wrong," he said, "in persecuting the Christians I beg you not to do as I have done They are good people Their doctrine is true"

Shortly after, he passed away, happily not before having perceived some of the light he had struggled so determinedly to shut out Brighter times dawned on Cross Bed, the little community met together full of joy, none wanting to make them afraid, the happiest and most grateful being Mephibosheth

"*What a good thing you persuaded me not to go to law!*" he said to Pang-di "Had I done so, it would have been war to the end In all probability our present condition would never have been attained God's ways are best"

On Cross-Bed I have never set foot, but another day as we traversed the tops of the high hills on the mainland we seemed almost within hailing distance Making our hands into a trumpet, we called across the strait of sea

"Watchman, what of the night?"

It seemed as if the voice of Mephibosheth clearly called back

"The night is far spent the day is at hand"

(IV)

The Chinese have a reputation for cruelty and callousness Is it deserved? Not always, certainly Once I was spending the hot weather at the charming little peaceful cottage by the sea belonging to Madam Grace and her friends, when a typhoon sprang up A special feature of typhoons is that the wind blows in a travelling circle, making navigation very dangerous, especially for small craft

It was Sunday morning, and the preacher just in the middle of his Chinese sermon, when loud voices disturbed the sabbatic calm All who live in China are inured to noises, but there are differences in noises In less time than it takes to write, everybody, Chinese and English alike had rushed out and were gazing at an upturned boat in the wide river to which three men were clinging Theirs were the cries for deliverance which we had just heard, nor did the cries fall on deaf ears Even before we could reach the garden wall a dozen boats from every direction had come flying through the water to the rescue Some

of them were such tiny craft we wondered how they dared attempt it in such a sea The first boat which reached the three men took them off, and eventually the water-logged boat was also brought safe ashore

But worse was to come The storm continued, and on Wednesday, as we sat at tiffin, a curious looking object went floating past in mid stream This time, not our "Holy Books" but our spoons and forks were hastily dropped, and again we were all outside, to find a greater disaster had befallen other poor souls For a time all we knew was that the long dark log was being swept further seaward, and on it the keener eyed among us discerned two men clinging But the unusual crowd gathered on the bank some distance further up, and trying in vain to launch a couple of boats, told its own tale We soon learned that a large boat had been upset by the contrary winds, that two men had somehow escaped in a small boat attached to the larger craft, and on reaching the village further up the bank had entreated assistance Four men were already drowned, but two, it was hoped, were still alive on the upturned boat drifting seaward

The village people did their utmost Speedily a couple of rowing-boats were manned and launched and we admiringly watched the gallant efforts to make headway It was all in vain, though they struggled long In that surging sea, against that violent wind, the bravest efforts were useless First one boat, and then the other, gave up the fruitless attempt For the first time in our lives we had the cruel experience of being compelled to leave men to their fate We could only pray that the boat would not be carried out to the open sea, but to the islands below, which hope was promptly quelled by the Chinese, who insisted that the men could not hold out so long Indeed this seemed probable

Four or five hours later, a couple of us fought our way up, through stinging rain and wind so fierce we could almost lie down upon it, to the nearest hill overlooking the bay There, in the dim distance, lay Jade Ring and Cross Bed islands, of tender associations We expected to see nothing more of the wreck To our astonishment, at last we discovered it, a solitary object floating aimlessly about And, oh joy! A single sail on all

that broad expanse was apparently making towards it from Great Door Hill, which is yet another large island on the opposite side of the bay, so far away that we should never have dared to hope for help from that direction.

Our excitement was intense. Sing Su and I sat on the summit, under shelter of the rude beacon, unable to take our eyes off those two converging points. We were chilled to the bone by the clouds of driving rain which swept over us again and again, drenching our summer clothing. We crouched together under one thin waterproof. When the two boats met in mid-bay, they both suddenly disappeared completely.

"They have gone under!" I exclaimed.

The fear that all would be lost, when all was so nearly won, was agonizing. But after a few moments both boats came again to the surface. A lowered sail, big waves, the distance, had concealed them temporarily from our view. Soon the gallant little boat again hoisted her sail, and was scudding away before the wind, back to her island before night should fall. And we followed her example.

We never succeeded in gaining the least information as to the fate of the two drifting sailors, whether they were still on the boat, and alive; such was the isolation of China in her solitary places, with no newspapers, telegraphs, or postmen. But one *thing we knew and rejoiced in: that if they were lost, it was* not because there was none to pity and no arm outstretched to save. At least one strenuous Chinese attempt at rescue was made, than which few incidents have stirred deeper emotions in our non-Chinese hearts.

CHAPTER XXVII A PASSPORT TO HEAVEN

(i)

LIFE flowed full for us in the White House; yet at the China New Year we had always a break in the routine, and different excitements. Our compound then became very gay indeed; especially so one year when the consulate on the River's Heart was under repair. Our consul and his family seized the chance of leaving the island, shut off as it was from our world, to come and live in our livelier compound. We were able to lend them one of the three houses which Sing Su had built for his colleagues.

During New Year's week, which happened in February that year, it is the custom for the officials to make state calls upon each other, those of the highest rank also calling upon the foreign consul in a port. From our upstairs veranda I had an excellent coign of vantage to watch the stately comings and goings of the grandees. First came our old friend, Mr. Kwo, who also called upon Sing Su, bringing with him the Customs Taotai. They were similarly attired. Mr. Kwo wore the usual round black hat, but as this was a so-called winter season, the broad brim was faced with fur, and the crown was tipped with the crystal button, or tiny globe of crystal, betokening his rank. A long dark plum-coloured coat with very wide sleeves reached nearly to his ankles, and was edged with white fur all round. On the chest and middle of the back were large squares of most beautiful hand-embroidery into which were worked his insignia of office—looking like breastplates. From them the initiated could at once tell whether the official were civil or military. Birds indicated the civil servant, and beasts the military, and the former were considered of much superior rank. From Mr. Kwo's neck hung a big heavy necklace, reaching to his knees, made of various beads, some red ones specially prominent. These necklaces varied, probably in accordance with the depth of the wearer's purse, some containing valuable pieces of jade, amber, coral, tourmaline. They are now, forty years later, finding their way to Europe and America, and are the delight of Western women. On Mr. Kwo's feet were dark satin top-boots, the soles being painted white.

Another day the highest of our city officials, the Taotai, also came to call on the consul, in company with the Prefect and the Magistrate The Taotai was a Hanlin, or member of the Forest of Pencils, which means one of the Professors of the Imperial College in Peking To be a Hanlin was to hold the highest possible literary degree The Taotai was said to write beautiful poetry, which was probably the secret of his success in life, as in China, under the old order, a good literary style was the open sesame to office Alas, again, the Taotai was an opium-smoker, which no doubt accounted for his pale face His robe of state was of costly sable, made in the form of a loose jacket, and worn over his long gown He took great care of it When he entered his sedan-chair, with the aid of his servant he carefully turned up the tails to avoid sitting on it His chair likewise was lined with fur.

On leaving, all the officials observed the usual Chinese custom Instead of shaking hands with each other, they made deep obeisances, and each shook hands with himself, not locking the fingers, but clasping one hand over the other, letting them first drop very low, then raising them to the brow, there shaking them gently in courteous style A much more agreeable method of salutation than ours, in a hot country

Ceremonies of this kind of official calling are short and sweet. the sweet being the light refreshments, which consist of candied fruits or similar dainties The last three officials each had eight bearers to carry his chair, and they formed a considerable cavalcade As the morning was wet, the sedans were covered with green oiled cloth, which detracted from the pageant, the chairs themselves being upholstered in bright green or blue cloth, and ornamented with gilt characters

The arrival of the august visitors had been heralded by the beating of drums, and also by a big crowd of ragamuffins who were paid a trifle to carry unfurled banners It was a matter of congratulation to us that only the Taotai s and Prefect's body soldiers entered our compound The Taotai s soldiers wore blue jackets adorned with red characters The Prefect's wore orange-coloured jackets with black characters on them To show how completely at variance Chinese and our ideas of manners were, let me say that these soldiers and chair-bearers,

without let or hindrance from their lords, stood peeping in through the windows the whole time that the exchange of courtesies was going on

It is all most interesting to look back upon, especially now that the old order changeth Soon nobody will remember the wearing of the peacock feather, or how it dropped from the back of the high mandarin's hat, with the crystal or coral button at the crown of the hat Chinese officials to-day wear no necklaces The embroidered " breastplates " are used for our gorgeous bags and cushions I love them all

But even more appealing than this New Year pomp and state in our compound was the presence of the consul's children in the White House precincts To watch the four chasing each other about the garden, playing ball, or flying delightedly along the paths on roller-skates was a piece of English child life which made music in our hearts, with Da ling and Sea borne so far away It was only temporary, for the next month the steamer which had superseded our *Eternal Peace* took them away also, to Old England

The root of bitterness in this was that they left behind in our little damp God's garden their devoted mother Perhaps not one of them will ever see again her last resting-place

(II)

It seems possible to take too great care of one's treasures Long hours, if not days have I spent in a vain search for one of my great prizes, my Passport to Heaven At the White House I kept it for years under lock and key. Here in England I have stored it away so cunningly that I begin to fear I shall never set eyes on it again Care for my Passport to the Skies is perhaps increased by the knowledge that whoever has it in possession thereby becomes heir to its accumulated merits Needing to inherit merit more than most, I naturally want to retain a hold on it

The Passport came to me as a free gift Only once or twice did the good woman who presented me with her erstwhile most precious possession actually set eyes on me in her rare visits to the City-of the-South Her home was in our distant Western

Hills But well did I know the man by whose hand she sent it her step-grandson, Mr Summers—Tsang poa

T P not only brought me the Passport, but also enlightened me as to its meaning To arrive at its significance I had almost to lay violent hands on him when he appeared in the study Though a man of no leisure whatsoever, I kept him close at my side for an hour while he explained the meaning of the intriguing document Sing Su fumed and fretted, scarce able to restrain himself, but in vain

"I want T P on much more imperative business," he sighed and groaned

Even then, only by determination did I reach enlightenment As I write my lips shut tight, while I live over again my struggle with those two good men I knew by that time that no one arrives at the inwardness of things Chinese without endless questioning, probing, and digging

The important document in question was a devout woman's Buddhist Passport to Heaven, her title deeds to a mansion in the skies her first-class ticket, her credentials to the high court of Heaven By virtue of it she could, when her last hour came go boldly up to what the Christian calls the Pearly Gates, but which the Buddhist styles the Golden Bridge, sure of obtaining an abundant entrance into endless felicity

On the Passport was written in Chinese ideographs and stamped with seals of gold and jade by a high priest of Buddhism the many works of supererogation and merit whereby Mrs Summers became an acknowledged heir to the realms of the blessed Believe me, it was at no small expenditure of time and money, as well as the endurance of much hardship that she obtained it

Out on the Eastern Sea is the Chusan group of islands Once held by the British, on them lie sleeping many of our dead British soldiers left there during the troubles of bygone years One of the most beautiful of these islands is the sacred Isle of Pootoo True, there are other places in China where similar Passports may be obtained, but Pootoo is the most famous centre on the China Coast From Mrs Summers home thither the journey is long and trying Some devoted but necessitous Buddhists anxious to make their calling and election sure go

round begging for a couple of years to raise the funds needed to reach Pootoo

It is now more than thirty years since our venerable lady braced herself for the great undertaking Never having seen the sea, she left her sheltered home between the hill tops After bidding ceremonious adieux to her relatives and friends, she came down by mountain chair and river boat to the City of the South where she took passage on the junk which once a year is chartered for pilgrims

' The Pootoo offering incense boat " is inscribed on the special flag which it flies

At shortest the sea voyage takes a week there and a week back If the winds are contrary it may take much longer The pilgrims may suffer shipwreck, or be attacked by pirates In addition, there is no suspicion of comfort on board a Chinese junk or sailing ship

Pootoo is full of temples and priests On arrival after paying about fifteen dollars—no mean sum to the Chinese of early days —Mrs Summers had no difficulty about obtaining the Passport But this was only the beginning Though she at once received the document, it would not come into operation till she had practised rigid vegetarianism for the space of three full years, and also done a prodigious amount of chanting and telling of her beads

The Passport consists of two documents a large and a smaller one The former, a yard long was destined for Mrs Summers' coffin when she came to be laid therein The less pretentious document was in reality the more important Without it the validity of the larger would later be disputed by the unseen powers At the funeral ceremony it would be burnt by the priests, who use this method of sending it in advance into the next world to inform the spirits of Mrs Summers' identity and speedy arrival

In the centre of the large document are outlined the figures of the Three Precious Ones Buddha being in the middle with his two chief disciples on either hand Below is a crude presentation of Heaven The entrance is guarded by two beast headed men one being called Ox head, the other Horse face The office of these guardians is to prevent unholy persons enter

ing the Presence, *i e* of Buddha In their hands each holds a trident with which they push down the unworthy into the depths below, where they are turned into serpents The fortunate possessor of such a Passport as mine will not be molested by these guards, but will be allowed quietly to pass over the Golden Bridge into unbounded joy, which is here represented by clouds and a few quaint figures Below this picture of Heaven is written a chant which must be repeated every day for three years Every repetition counts as a gem, and the more frequently the chant is recited, the greater the store of jewels laid up

What says the chant?

"Buddhas, buddhas, three hundred and sixty thousands of billions of billions of buddhas, twenty nine thousand numberless buddhas, the five hundred special ones, and buddhas numerous as the sands of the Ganges, the eighty thousand clever and wise buddhas, the coming buddha who comes with your chanting, the buddhas in the Palace of Heaven, like stars in number, the buddhas on earth, like dust in number, the buddhas numerous as the drops in a seven days and seven nights' rain, the buddhas numerous as on the banks of all the rivers and streams, the buddhas numerous as all the leaves of the trees of the forest, the bright buddhas, numerous as twigs, *the age-honoured buddhas, assembled on the spirit hill, the* seven generations of one's own ancestral buddhas, all the buddhas of the three ages, past, present, and future

"Whoever chants this sand in number, chant, will be able to see distinctly the way over the Na mo (or glory) Bridge into Heaven This wonderful chant repeated four thousand times makes a pathway on which all the devils and spirits below Heaven fear to attack you The Mi to youth tolls the golden bell When he has tolled it but a few times hell is emptied (by your work of supererogation), even *the Prince of Hell* is turned into a buddha (by such merit), and every living thing leaves hell" *The document ends*

"This is given to Mrs Summers of West Stream as a proof of hand at the Pootoo Hill in the Hall of Learning"

The good woman returned homeward and for three full years she daily chanted—daily prayed, shall I say?—this chant and

refrained from animal food Nor was that all At the end of the three years there came another important ceremony, called The Eternal Life Chanting, in preparation for death She summoned half a dozen priests, who from early morn till midnight chanted prayers on her behalf To make doubly sure, another dispatch was written by her local priest to the Three Precious Ones, setting forth all that this devout woman had done, and therefore how worthy she was of admission into the heavenly places Then and there this was sent into the other world by burning

Needless to say, these ceremonies and services were a costly business, for which Mrs Summers gladly paid the sum, large in those days to her and to most Chinese, of seventy dollars Had she died at the end of the three years' abstinence and chanting, the priests would have been called in for further chanting On this last and most solemn occasion, the smaller and what I have called the more important of her two Pootoo documents would have had the blank spaces filled in with her name, address, and special claim to favour, after which it too would have been sent into the next world by the usual method of burning The larger document would have been put in her coffin with her

Thus ran the smaller of the two documents

"This document is given under the hand of So-and so, priest, appointed by the abbot of the Buddhist Assembly at Pootoo in the Prefecture of Ningpo, in the Province of Chekiang in the Empire of China, as evidence, to Mrs Summers of West Stream

"Whereas the passing light is quickly gone, the strength of youth uncertain, if in this life no reformation is undertaken, in the life to come what evidence will one have with which to cross the ferry? But she, being willing to give herself up to religion and become a vegetarian, on a certain date has come to the famous islands of the Eastern Sea earnestly beseeching the merciful Father-abbot at Pootoo to be her leader She offers up incense, asks him to inform the buddhas that she willingly repents of her former errors, earnestly begs for the happiness of the future life to be given a holy (*i e* Buddhist) nature, and relies upon the abbot, in the name of the Three Precious Ones, to offer up merits for her, to recompense the merits of her forebears, to grant her the Three Blessings (sons, long life, happiness),

and on this account prays the influence of the buddhas She therefore believes the Buddhist doctrine, and receives this written proof of her devotion, carrying about with her this everlasting evidence This document is given to her as a token of the happiness she is to receive

" May the brightness of Buddha rest on her, and her lucky star ever shine on her in every generation as she draws nearer to Buddha hood, hearing chants through all the ages "

As I said at the outset, this Passport of the Buddhist religion is transferable After the whole round was completed the document might have been sold for a hundred dollars, or handed to another · as indeed was done by Mrs Summers to my unworthy self Such rarely occurs, except perhaps when the owner has become so reduced that the poverty of the present is more galling than the hell of the future ! Some there are who in the direst poverty still refuse to sell their Passport for any consideration whatever, counting it their chief good

Then came the hiatus in Mrs Summers' religious experience when in Pauline parlance, she was fool enough for Christ's sake to throw overboard the accumulated merits of her pilgrimage to Pootoo, her three years' daily abstention from meat, and her three years' toil in daily chanting I ponder Was it also to make another kind of sacrifice and burn her bridges that she passed *on to me, who call myself a Christian, and whom she no* longer looked upon as an outside barbarian from the West the document which she formerly held to be more precious than life ? Surely it must have been very hard to part from it

Can you wonder that, with not an atom of confidence in its intrinsic value I yet greatly prize my Passport to Heaven ? Nor shall I be content until I discover where I have so cleverly hidden it

CHAPTER XXVIII SIR ROBERT HART

IN South China the people had a saying · "Heaven is high, and the Emperor a long way off" The implication was that they need fear little interference or help from either of those quarters

The summer of 1898 was both a disturbing and an epoch-making period for the Manchu Government We of the South had perhaps as much cognizance of events as the various Legations in Peking, so carefully were political movements hidden there In the June of that year, also, I went North, sent thither by Sing Su for health's sake It is no use blinking the fact that South China saps the energies and steals the colour from the cheeks of Europeans When I took my first furlough, my distressed mother made many comparisons between my pallid complexion, which had been rosy, and the countenances of the blooming stay at home Englishwomen around I had paid the price

However, that same pale face earned me the joys of a trip North after fourteen years of Southern humidity and the restrictions of a small port It was with some trepidation that I set forth on my thousand mile journey, for I had to leave Sing Su behind and transportation in China was a very different matter in those days from these Just before the thermometer would be disporting itself among the nineties, the end of June found me aboard our toy steamer *en route* for Pei tai ho, the newly discovered Eldorado of health in the Gulf of Pechihli I dreaded the sea voyage with its changes of steamer, its probably bad weather, and certain sea sickness I was to board a railway, the first built in North China, the first I had ever been on in China, in charge of presumably ill-trained irresponsible Chinese, new to the whole idea of a railway I knew nobody, and was unable either to speak or understand the Northern speech Worst of all was the heat The end of my forebodings was that the two hundred miles between the City-of the South and Ningpo the first stage, was the only part which provided me suffering!

But my fears were not groundless Every mother's heart in Pei tai ho ached when tidings came that, during the heat wave which passed over North China while I happened to be on the sea, the eldest of a family of five children on their way thither from Shanghai had died of heat within one day of the coolness of Pei tai ho Another lady was well nigh beside herself because two of her children had heat stroke during the last few miles from the station to the shore Again I thanked God that Da ling and Sea borne were safe in England

You may be sure that I heard while on board of all the mishaps every steamer had suffered on the fickle China Coast

"This particular ship always has good voyages" said an officer to me

Soon after, another told of a recent voyage when the steamship *Lien Shing* had suffered severely The chief officer was in charge when a huge wave broke and washed away the bridge, the compass, and the steering gear The tumult woke the captain from his sleep He rushed on deck in his pyjamas, to find his fine big ship at the mercy of the Pacific and never a sign of officer on duty or steersman It was a cold dark night Rapidly groping his way aft, he stumbled on something

"Who are you?" he asked

"Quartermaster, sir"

"Where 's the chief?"

"Washed overboard, I think, sir"

A few steps further he came across another body. It was the chief officer himself with ribs so pressed in he could hardly speak though he afterwards recovered with three months' care in the Shanghai Hospital The captain fixed up the hand steering gear in his drenched garments which soon froze on him

"And where is the *Lien Shing* now? I asked

"Oh, she has just been towed into Shanghai with two blades of her propeller broken," I was told

Good voyages indeed! I can testify that this Northern Coast can vie with the Bay of Biscay for awfulness It has produced in me such a sickness as I do not expect death to outdo

My fellow passengers seemed under a vow of silence, which became so dignified and complete that I could hardly restrain unseemly laughter At last I ventured a simple remark to the

only other lady I received in response a stare then a look of dismay—at her husband They were both Russians! However the night before we reached the Taku Bar, near Tientsin when there remained but two of us, the ice was at last shattered by my hitherto taciturn American messmate I knew he was the then chairman of the Shanghai Municipal Council To the captain and myself he became friendly and loquacious He made no secret of the object of his visit which was to interview the Ministers of the various Legations concerning the much needed enlargement of the Foreign Settlement in Shanghai to which the Taotai or ruler of the city, was opposed

After I left the boat at the mouth of the Tientsin River troubles began I travelled safely over two small railways before reaching the main railroad and arrived at Pei tai ho station which is seven miles from the shore Sing Su and I had been attracted to Pei tai ho by an advertisement which stated that in June a large comfortable guest house would be ready there for occupation and of course in those days North China boasted few hotels All was arranged between us and the manager whose last letter added the polite wish that he hoped my stay would be a pleasant one It was but no thanks to him! I chose to ride a donkey rather than sit in a closed cart for the seven miles but they seemed fourteen We plodded through the *kao liang* fields the owner of the animal running alongside till we came in sight of the sea I looked and looked again for the big comfortable house in which I had come so far to rest All I could discern was a tiny bungalow and far apart two or three empty cottages on the edge of the sea Then in another direction rose the bare outlines of a more pretentious building just rising above its foundations It was indeed the promised haven of the advertisement

The American owners of the tiny bungalow had never seen me before but they put me up for the night indignant with their compatriot whose letters had so beguiled us I never set eyes on the delinquent the whole of my stay North nor did he ever apologize The next night I shared one of the empty cottages with a strange man and his wife and prepared myself for loneliness rather than start off back for Sing Su and the hot Southern city The booming of the sea which was very near

gave me a violent headache I was prostrate When recovered, I hired me a donkey and ambled seven miles further along the shore in search of a young lady who had married a friend of ours a Scot who had made us an excellent Commissioner of Maritime Customs in the City of-the South I went to ask advice; and this dear and charming girl, touched, I suppose, by my pale face, came to my cottage in return next day and took me away with her to join the happy company that filled her own Sunny Lodge! Nor would she brook any hesitancy on my part The West End was a very cheerful part of Pei-tai ho, and I had one of the most perfect holidays of my life The cool breezes blew, we were all bent on pure pleasure The sea was our hilarious play ground, the meeting place where we gathered *en masse*, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, children, uncles, aunts—all joined hands in the sun kissed buoyant waters and played ring a roses Our swimming coach was a respected schoolmaster from Tientsin, who for the life of him could not allow our futile at tempts at swimming to pass uncorrected One of the red letter days of my life was when, escorted on either side by a strong swimmer, I swam out what seemed to me an incredible distance, then turned and came back, this time lightly resting my hands on a shoulder of each of my male attendants

With childish glee and daring I gave Sing Su an exhibition of my new powers and fresh health when he joined us in August as I took a dive over his head from his hands clasped behind his back Walks, picnics, excursions, and delightful social intercourse filled the joyful hours—although we were but a party of five women in Sunny Lodge Yet remarkable ones, for of the younger half of the number I was the only one who had been educated in England The dowager-like mother of my hostess and her two sisters was besides myself, the only one who owed anything directly to the England to which she had bidden adieu forty years before Later she started out to see it once more, but she only reached Hong-Kong, where she died and is buried Her daughters had lived most of their lives in Formosa the Beautiful—as its name implies That large island had been handed over but a short time before my visit, as a result of the Sino-Japanese War, to what my friends then stigmatized as Japanese misrule It would be interesting to have their views

of Japanese colonial policy now They had made an even longer sea-voyage than myself to reach Pei tai ho

The education of these three beautiful girls had been conducted by their mother Their French was better than mine, their musical education at least equal to mine The palm for loveliness I gave to our friend the Commissioner's wife, but the other two followed hard after her

" How did such culture and intelligence come to be achieved in such circumstances ? " I asked their mother in astonishment one day

She told me that when one of the girls asked a question she could not answer, they always looked it up and found out if possible Their accomplishments they owed largely to sojourners One consul would be an expert at the piano , a Commissioner who might be perhaps a Frenchman or German would impart his knowledge of those languages Most of them found pleasure in imparting their special gifts to the girls who provided them with what social life there was The two younger had spent a winter with their eldest sister, whose married home was now in Peking and they had added considerably to the life of the Northern capital

My host, our former Commissioner of the City of the South, was held in Peking by his secretarial duties to the Inspector-General of Customs Sir Robert Hart who himself soon arrived at his new bungalow five minutes' walk away from us Accompanying him was his young private secretary, the son of a former British Minister in Peking who in addition, was an aspirant to the hand of the youngest of our Three Graces and whom some thought the beauty of the family We were agog with interest

That evening the " I G " as Sir Robert was known all over China dined with us There was I facing the man whose name had been given to a mountain near our Southern city, with its feet washed by our own River Bowl In appearance the Inspector General was of middle height , his head was bald, and his long beard and moustache were grey His eyes were blue grey his face—now long and thin—was broad at the top his teeth were large and irregular, and he stooped ! His collar was low in the neck, and his morning tie was in

variably of two shades of blue His comments on the journey were amusing

"It is the first time in sixteen years that I have left Peking," he said "It is also the first time I have clearly seen my face all those years, for my mirror in Peking is in the shade In the train I had a good look at myself, and I apostrophized myself 'I did not know you were either so old or so ugly!'"

Sir Robert was a force to be reckoned with, and had wrought great things as an organizer He was an autocrat He said to one, Come, and he came, to another, Go, and he went—perhaps to an outlandish spot like Meng tsz on the Burmese border There was no appeal against his ruling His own brother he sent to the borders of Tibet

"He says there is nothing there for him to do but shoot wild beasts and birds," said the I G "But I think he has missed a fine opportunity He is very good natured, and the Tibetans like him, and would even permit him to visit Lhassa" Yet such an enviable privilege as that did not induce the brother to delay a moment longer than he could avoid in such a God-forsaken country

In the Chinese Maritime Customs, under Sir Robert, there was what was familiarly known as the Royal Family, of which our host was a hard-working and worthy member These men were chosen, not merely for ability, but for sentimental reasons also, That their fathers had been schoolfellows approved by him was justification for Sir Robert twenty or thirty years later offering posts in the Service of his creation to their sons And the system justified itself, for good stock often produces good sons

"Honesty compels me to admit that I have not the slightest recollection of a schoolfellow called Hart," wrote one father to whom he had offered a post for his son

"But I remember you and all your works," replied Hart and the son had the post

On another occasion he recognized the signature to a magazine article as that of a former schoolfellow He wrote him through the editor, with the result that another worthy son found good and lasting work to do out East

The I G enjoyed going over past events and gave us many

samples of his doings But sentiment was only one trait in his character A mistake, an error in judgment in those under him, was rarely forgiven, and perhaps never forgotten

" He can say hard things, and do them too," said one sufferer to me bitterly, " although I told him that in like circumstances I must do exactly the same again "

Apparently Sunny Lodge was not without its attractions, for Sir Robert announced that every day he would come and read aloud to us for an hour On a brilliant morning I fear we sometimes regretted our lost opportunities in the sea Often he would recite poems, of which he had a goodly store, and, to my no small pleasure, he kindly wrote a poem of his own composition in my book Sitting on the veranda, he loved to tell stories of his life, and particularly of his early days Once the Irish boy—for such he was—aged eleven, ran away from his school in Dublin to ship as crew of a pirate ship, having been stirred thereto by Captain Marryat's stories He stole away clad in two suits, one over the other, and a third he carried in a paper parcel Alas his disillusionment was speedy At the docks the one ship he found bound for the West Indies was dirty and dingy ' I voted my expectations a farce," he said, " and returned to school The butler opened the door, winked, and said I should catch it ! Indeed, a master was just starting for Liverpool in search, and oh ! the look of disapproval he gave me ! My too speedy reappearance had deprived him of a holiday "

Hart was reported to the headmaster, and was requested, after prayers to stand out He did so, and in that conspicuous position was held up to his first notoriety

' The master grew redder and redder, and sent for a new whip ' went on Sir Robert ' and I was beaten, but being held between two boys, escaped fairly well, many of the blows falling on them "

A lady looked on superciliously at the caning

You don't look very sorry for poor young Hart," remarked some one to her

' No, she retorted " for I know he was well prepared slates to the front of him, and slates to the back of him ! '

One year he was pronounced the bad boy of the school The



Photo by Lady Hosie

In a Buddhist Temple
Earnestly devout souls strive to
gain their Passports to Heaven

good boy, Bibleck, was strong in Scripture, so Hart for fun determined to wrest the coveted supreme prize from him He worked furiously till only himself and Bibleck remained of the ten aspirants Bibleck grew nervous under the strain, Hart kept cool, and the prize for Holy Scripture had perforce to be awarded to the worst boy in the school Even at sixty Sir Robert delighted in this nefarious victory.

One of the most interesting mornings was when he gave us his experiences of forty years earlier, when the Taiping rebels overran half China There was so much to be said in their favour that the then Mr Hart felt tempted to join them, and indeed an interpreter of the rebels made overtures to him During their many talks, this interpreter one day showed him a document he had from the so-called "king of peace," the head of the rebels Hart covered it with his hands

"Now I have you, you have given yourself into my hands This is your head!" he said in joke

Swift as lightning the man snatched the incriminating document from Hart, and threw it into the fire

"What a pity to destroy such a document! You don't think I would have used it?" queried Hart

"You looked quite capable of it," he answered

Later this same interpreter, becoming disgusted with the Taipings, wrote offering his services to Hart

"I will serve you as faithfully as I have the Taipings," he set down

"Which,' commented Sir Robert, "I took to mean, until he quarrelled with me too I declined the offer."

During the threatened invasion of Shanghai by the rebels, Mr Hart became Commissioner of the Maritime Customs This office originated in the desire of the British, American, and French consuls that the Chinese Government should, in those distracted times continue to receive its dues from the foreign ships, which would otherwise have gone scot-free From the top of his house Mr Hart could see the camps of the rebels Very active in their service was an American called Burgoyne, who haunted the suburbs of Hongkew Mr Hart went to Mr. Seward, the American consul, and afterwards American Minister in Peking and asked for a warrant to arrest Burgoyne.

"Certainly," agreed the consul, "he ought to be under restraint," and signed the warrant.

Hart left, to learn afterwards that at that same moment Burgoyne was in the next room drinking tea with the consul's sister!

Restraint was certainly not much known in those early days Sir Robert told us of a certain Commander Sausmarez in charge of the *Cormorant* in Ningpo in 1856 An incorrigible gambler, he had been known, when his officers were on other errands, to slip away, sit in the street and play with the man who gambled oranges for a living He won everything from him oranges, board, the man's whole stock in-trade!

In all sincerity Sir Robert turned to me one day "I advise no one," he said, "to follow my example in any way No one else would make the mistakes I have made And any one could do the things I have done" But few have

Sir Robert did not please every one Certainly not the English consul who, Sir Robert told us himself, when officially informed that the British Government had bestowed on him—the I G—a baronetcy, made the announcement into a ball and kicked it round the room!

'Why ennoble a man for working often enough against *British interests, who would kow tow or do anything on earth* to get reforms in China?" This was also the standpoint of many others

Sir Robert, interesting in private talk, was a fish out of water in mixed company He fell silent when we were visited by the tall and imposing Secretary to the Legation in Peking Most happy seemed he when speaking of the workings of Providence

"Nothing is unimportant," he philosophized He used the pillow-lace we were then making in illustration The throw of a bobbin, the twist of a thread, these on the surface appeared a jumble, yet are all necessary to the pattern He proceeded to point the moral from experience "I had not been to church for two years," said he "but when my old friend, Bishop Russell, came to Peking I went to hear him After service I called in to see the British Minister, Sir Thomas Wade, and found him in his office absorbed in writing a dispatch When he was at liberty, Sir Thomas said he was about to order the British flag to be hauled down, and he

himself would leave Peking" An action tantamount to a declaration of war

"Why?" asked Hart "This is a very serious matter Pray reconsider it"

It seemed that the Chinese had offered to make some restitution for the recent murder of the young consul, Margary, whom I have mentioned before Now they wanted, apparently, to withdraw their concession, which Wade could not brook Sir Robert persuaded him to delay action went himself to the Tsung li yamen, where he found there had been a misunderstanding He informed them, nevertheless that such proceedings could not be tolerated, and they decided to keep their agreement The following day Bishop Russell tiffined with Sir Robert

"What do you think the good Christian Chinese are saying?" smilingly said the Bishop "That Queen Victoria has sent me here to Peking to make peace!"

"And you have made peace," rejoined Sir Robert "Had you not come, I should not have gone to church nor called to see Sir Thomas Wade and the mischief would have been done"

The Bishop covered his face with his hands to hide his emotion

At one period even Sir Robert came to the end of his patience and, decided to resign, for the Chinese Government had made demands impossible to fulfil Perturbed, distressed he strolled into his chief secretary's office Hardly knowing what he did, he took down a volume of the Chinese classics The first phrase his eyes lighted on consisted of only four ideographs

"When a man is making a mound he does not stop for lack of a last basket of earth," he read in the terse Chinese

He changed his resolve, he would keep on piling up baskets of earth"—far more and far heavier than he dreamed of then Ay, during the siege of the Legations, in 1900, he humbled himself and became as one of the least, a drawer of water from the well for the besieged host! He was truly an extraordinary mixture of a man his greatness disentangling itself from amidst curiously twisted warps

During that awful catastrophe of 1900 every house in Pe-

tai ho, including the I G 's own and the Sunny Lodge in which we sat, was razed to the ground Not even their boundary stones could the owners find

We spoke of the uncertainties of life in an Eastern climate Sir Robert told us how in his Customs Service at Wuhu the Commissioner had to leave, broken in health, and his first assistant was put in charge He died, and the Customs doctor was hastily appointed by telegraph to succeed him He, in turn went out of his mind, and the mantle perforce fell on the only member of the staff left, a young son of Bishop Moule's

The Chinese Maritime Customs, largely the creation of Sir Robert, with the unstinted loyalty of its foreign staff, was looked upon by us as an example worthy of increased imitation by the Chinese It acts wholly in the service of China, and the uprightness with which it collects and passes on to the Central Government the huge funds which come under its administration deserves admiration In this it is *sans peur et sans reproche* Judge, then, of the interest with which I listened to two recent criticisms of it from a noted Chinese

' It is unfair that the I G 's salary is at a higher rate of exchange than any of his subordinates," he said But that had been an arrangement, open and above board, between Sir Robert and the Chinese Government, who certainly had not grudged the value of his unique services to them The other criticism related to the expense involved in keeping a London office But it is a European clearing house, not only for England but also for the other nations of the West Surely both countries are to be congratulated when only two such criticisms can be urged against a huge administration England for being able to render such a service to China, and China for the service received

It was Sir Robert who arranged the Chinese Loan of that year 1898 His private secretary told us he himself had carried in his hands from Peking to the bank in Tientsin, bonds to the value of eight millions sterling made into an innocent paper parcel A fellow passenger joked with him about his package

May I not carry my tennis shirt to Tientsin if I like? he retorted But a loaded revolver also travelled in his pocket, and he would have defended with his life those bonds belonging to the China he served

(iii)

One day Dr. Morrison appeared on the veranda. He was then at the beginning of his celebrated career as the Peking correspondent of the London *Times*. He came to China from Australia, and he never quite lost his Australian accent or turn of speech. At that time he placed as little value on the work of missionaries as did the world then on his own achievements; but, later, honesty compelled him to own himself in the wrong. On one of his inland journeys he found himself in a Chinese city with a threatening mob at his heels. He spoke no word of Chinese; and it was a white-faced, frightened man who tumbled headlong through the door into the missionary's compound, who himself told me the story, and with whom he found safety. After the midday meal Morrison knelt reverently with the rest, giving thanks for deliverance from peril. After this, he had a different opinion about the need for missions

When Dr. Morrison went to England after the Boxer troubles his reputation was already made, and he was invited to a week-end party by one of the editors of *The Times*. During dinner his host asked him to tell about an interview he had had with Li Hung-chang.

"It was very simple," said Morrison. "He did not keep me long. By way of appraising my worth he immediately asked me: 'How much do they pay you?' I replied: 'Excellency, my salary is so small that I should be ashamed to mention it in your august presence!'"

The rapier-thrust went home. Next morning Mr. Walter asked him point-blank how much the office paid him.

"Far too little," he commented, when told. "I must see the office about it."

Which was how Morrison worked skilfully one oracle.

Having to call one day later on in my life at his house in Peking, I found Dr. Morrison ill. During our talk he showed me, almost with pride, the marks of the spear thrust into his thigh by a South Sea Islander when as a young man he had gone adventuring. He was unconventional, and had wandered far over the earth's surface, often with scant funds. He loved to

tell us how he had been compelled occasionally to travel third-class on steamers

"Amusing to find myself taking my meals with the first class passengers' servants!" he said

(iv)

It was not all sunshine at Pei tai ho We had a week of too, too solid rain, during which neither postman nor needed provisions reached us The railway was swept away in parts and the Chinese farmers broke away other parts, to free their inundated fields from water Gentlemen *en route* for Pei tai ho could neither go backward nor forward, and lived in railway carriages, bereft of food and everything As soon as they dared, one or two bold spirits swam across the swollen stream, leaving their "Boys" to follow with their clothes But they were unable to do so There were the foreign gentlemen, *in puris naturalibus*, and saved only by borrowing what stray garments a Chinese engine-driver could spare!

The heavy rain brought down some of the houses which were built upon sand With little or no foundations, the walls had in addition to carry the weight of a foot thick of mud plastered under their roof tiles—the Northern Chinese method of making a house rain proof One English father, summoned from Tientsin wept when he saw the devastation from which his wife and children had narrowly escaped with their lives It took a terrible time to dig his little girl out of the hole into which she had been thrown Happily a table had fallen on top of her and saved her from worse than a slight concussion of the brain He had entrusted the building of his bungalow to a local Chinese builder of repute, and whom he had well paid The houses of Pei tai ho are very differently built to-day

CHAPTER XXIX THE FIRST RAILWAY

"I AM a most unfortunate man," declared Sing Su. "Seven years ago, in 1891, I undertook the fearfully toilsome journey to Peking alone, with the purpose of seeing if it would be possible for my wife to endure it and live. On my return I said, Quite impossible. Now with this second visit, undertaken for her benefit, to show her the glories of the capital, I foresee I shall have to come a third time, to show the children!"

Which latter partly came true.

He had followed me North that summer of 1898, but we had to be back in Shanghai to catch a certain steamer which would land us in our own city in time for Sing Su to keep his appointments with his famous henchmen, Ka-kung, Pang-di, Ding-er, Mr. Summers, and others of that ilk. Together they would plan the autumn and winter's work, and then scatter into the seven large country districts in which we now had centres of light and teaching. If I was to see Peking we must tear ourselves away at the height of summer from the enchanted life at Pei-tai-ho, where I had thirstily drunk from a full cup of unaccustomed pleasure.

Our departure was attended with as many *contretemps* as my arrival. The rains poured, the roads were terrible—channels of water or quagmires of sucking, clinging, deep mud. Our hired chair-bearers demanded such outrageous sums that we attempted a start in the opposite direction via Shanhaikuan, but more outrageous rain foiled us. At Shanhaikuan the Great Wall of China ends its formidable career, somewhat lamely, in the sea. The railway runs through what was formerly an old broken-down aperture in the Wall itself, but to do this had to make a detour: for the Chinese, afraid in those days to offend the spirits of wind and water, refused to allow the Wall to be opened in a more direct and therefore cheaper place. From Pei-tai-ho on a clear day we could trace the "Old Dragon" as it ran up the distant mountains and down into the sea, and espy the land on its other side, which was not China proper but Manchuria.

When at last, on September 9, we came to terms for the hire of a donkey for Sing Su, a chair and two bearers for me, a cart for the

Bread-maker, and another for luggage, we went to bed hopeful We slept in our clothes, made our pillows of newspapers, rose at five, and saw that the deluge had subsided It was amazing with what agility the heavy bullock carts moved over the sticky ground, especially when the bullock was yoked with a mule to set the pace Our men slid and slipped through the clay, and half the way waded through water They had nothing on their heads but squares of cotton cloth, and soon divested themselves of shoes and stockings We travelled Indian file through the fields of kao liang, the grain largely used in the North for the feeding of animals It grows ten or twelve feet high, has a long leafy stem, and a heavy brush of a head with red brown bead-like grains We were completely hidden in it, and it took all my time warding off the wet leaves from continually slashing my face There was very little rice under cultivation, but much millet—good for man and beast

We had met the chief foreign director of this, the first true railway in China—an Englishman, Mr Kinder Under him was a staff of British aides de-camp in the shape of engineers Mr Kinder's post was much coveted, and the Russians had often done their best to oust him but in vain His devotion to his work was beyond dispute, nor were his demands on his assist ants less heavy, according to them The difficulty was that the foreigners never knew what side issues might be affecting their Chinese masters

The line runs through level country relieved by occasional rocks and hills with mile after mile of millet, and a few trees But what interested us at the wayside stations, after the South, were the little stalls of fruits we had forgotten existed, apples, peaches, and splendid grapes At Lanchow we passed over a bridge, then the biggest in China Partly iron, it was built over a river in whose sandy bed were strong piers of stone How strange and trusting it seemed in those days to find a Chinese stand there waving the white flag of safety! As yet we pre-ferred, in China as in England, to trust only the tried few with our money or our lives

But the most interesting place on this line is Tongshan, where are the largest coal mines of North China, and described to us as "a hell upon earth" when Europeans first found them in 1870

In 1926 I had the privilege of going down a portion of these mines, now some of the best managed in the world, and found excellent conditions and modern machinery There was of course no sort of Government supervision, but neither was there any fire damp The managers are mostly Belgians At Pei tai ho a British doctor had told me that at Tongshan he had a larger practice than any man in England The kindness of this Dr Robertson justified his existence truly A miner's wife, whether Chinese or European I know not, was desperately ill, and for eight weeks he nursed her at night, sleeping on a bench and only going home to change his clothes He fed her through the opening made by a broken tooth

We soon came to the plains of Chihli province, flat and not particularly green, by no means enchanting The houses were made entirely of mud and plastered all over with it, and were one monotonous unrelieved dun grey colour, a terrible sight for an artistic eye to endure on its retina for months The approach to Tangku found us in flat, wet marshland, through which flowed the Peiho then too shallow to allow steamers to go up as far as Tientsin Even when there was water enough, it was a feat to navigate its windings and as likely as not the bowsprit would be poked into some Chinese peasant's garden or his rice-pan To me it seemed there was water wherever the people did not want it, but little enough where they did namely the bed of the river, for as we neared Tangku both sides of the line were inundated for a long distance Standing out of the water here and there were tiny islets of the endless grey mud in the shape of the household graves

The station at Tientsin was as is usual there, an unmitigated hubbub

"There never will be order," said a railway engineer, "till three foreigners are appointed instead of one as at the present and that one without any authority"

"There never will be order till Chinese directors of railways are forbidden to put in office all their relatives and wives' relatives as useless wage-earners cluttering up the place," said another

Crowds of noisy coolies were kept somewhat in check by a Chinese who stalked about with a long whip in his hand!

quarter hours · and the greatest difference was in the comfort We visited the English stores in Tientsin to lay in provisions for our journey to the Great Wall, as less dear than Peking, but even so, prices were ruinous, and we reduced our needs to a minimum

The departure from Tientsin was as frenzied as the arrival No attempt is made on a Chinese railroad to part a Chinese from his luggage · he would never submit We circumnavigated mounds of cotton bags and dumps of household goods tied in blue cloth, filling every gangway of the train, and guarded by watchful owners We were glad to leave the mud-flats of Tientsin, even though the country round was in a flooded state and the little Chinese houses stood in lakes They are built of grey mud, mixed with chopped kao liang straw But presently the country became more attractive

"*It is almost pretty,*" *said I, thinking of the relief to the eye* of green bushes and tall millet

"Yes, but only in comparison," replied Sing Su, and our thoughts went to our City of the-South with its mountains and rice plains and broad river Still we were glad up here of warm clothing, for the air was almost chilly We reflected that Down There people would be attired in thin white suits

One of the constructing engineers of the line joined us in the coupé, where we had at last found peace The French, he told us, had tried hard to be given the construction of this railway, but the Chinese had held fast to its management themselves, employing what Europeans they chose, with Mr Kinder at their head

"We have considerable anxiety when the floods are out," he said, "as there would be a rare to do if traffic were stopped on this line!"

This struck one as inconsistent, considering the opposition of the Chinese to any railway at all for so long

"Now," he commented, "they see its advantages"

The line had cost £4000 per mile, and £2500 had just been paid for a new engine, he told us One method of protecting the banks against the ever recurring danger from flood was by laying bundles of matting, or even kao liang stalks ten feet long, against it.

"A Chinese first suggested this to me, and I laughed at the idea," he said, "but one learns! I found it was a method well worth adoption"

He dreaded the severe cold of the Northern winter worse than the summer heat Very trying then were his journeys up and down the line on his trolley worked by four coolies, though he enveloped himself in furs, covered his ears with caps, and his hands with fur gauntlets

Travelling with us was also the First Secretary to the British Legation He had been suddenly recalled to Peking, he told me, and we learned afterwards it was to allow of Sir Claude Macdonald, the British Minister, going to Pei tai ho Thus Sir Claude was away from Peking when the Dowager Empress presently made her famous *coup d'état* and put the young Emperor off the throne for his too modern propositions

Within an hour the distant Western Hills came into view, and the absence of the wet Southern rice fields gave the country a home like appearance To Sing Su this approach to Peking was of great interest as he compared the present rapidity and ease with his laborious experience only seven short years earlier To me, the erstwhile distant and unattainable capital had been the height of mystery and glamour My mind went to the stories of our early pioneers there, the incidents in whose lives were much fresher in our minds naturally than they are in the memories of foreigners living in China to-day They were then but a generation past In 1860 Sir Harry Parkes was a prisoner within its fortress like walls and was ultimately carried out in the greatest wretchedness as he believed to execution—though happily it proved to be to freedom

The train stopped five miles from the city in 1898 so that its breathings and bellowings should not disturb the guardian dragon of the capital and bring punishment on the Empire Our host was the husband of our lovely Pei tai ho hostess So with the aid of his carter we ploughed through the crowd of coolies in blue cotton who fought for the privilege of carrying luggage, and we finally reached his cart A cart was, until after the Boxer holocaust, the only and the fashionable method of transport in the metropolis His equipage was, however, of a superior variety, and showed foreign adaptation to our method

of sitting rather than curling up the legs On two wheels, it went slowly enough to enable the driver to jump on and off as the exigencies of the road required Chinese passengers from the train were hiring carts from the long waiting string of them Under the light arched cover of blue cloth they sat on the bottom tailor-wise Our friend's vehicle had a well in the interior, and the seat was padded and had springs

Never was padding more essential! This was my first experience of a Peking cart on a Peking road of those days, but it was not my worst I had heard and read graphic descriptions of the torture endured by the individuals consigned to their enclosure, but the half has never been told, nor can be For sheer violence to the anatomy it surpassed any motion of any ocean It took two hours to crawl the five miles to the Ch'ien Men—the City Gate—and bump the extra half mile to our friend s house inside the wall A sharp crack on the right side of my head would be followed by a sudden lurch in the opposite direction which dealt me another crack before I could put up my hand My best hat threatening to become a speedy wreck, I removed it and the hat-pins of those days, lest I be brained During the two hours' ride every nerve was jarred and racked, and I questioned what sort of a wreck would be presented to my host on arrival I ceased to see any glory in China's ancient civilization The state of the road leading to the Imperial City was indescribable with ruts, stones (small ones and boulders) open cesspools in mid road, pits with thick black mud

"The foreigners sneaked in the last five miles of railroad," remarked some one later to me, 'against Imperial instructions"

"I do not regret it,' I retorted

The Ch'ien Men, or Front Gate of Peking, is a high tower like four square structure planted on the city wall itself To-day it has been restored to its first grandeur and stands in isolation for a road has been cut on both sides of it through the wall But in those days it was as devoid of beauty or ornament as a North country mill Within the wall was a wide street full of pitfalls and chasms, lined with houses and shops of the most ramshackle, grimed, and tumble-down description very different from to-day I had by this time a profound admiration for our carter His agility and perspiring gymnastics recalled the

Ningpo boatman who insisted on imposing his heavy bag of rice on the raft when he took us up the shallow stream He jumped off here to lighten the load for his mule, ran alongside there, pulled at the shafts with desperate strength, or helped a wheel over a boulder

When we came to the Tatar City, the front gate of which was opened only for the Emperor, we entered at the customary side gate, to find roads of splendid width but just as utterly awful, in spite of the same long strings of carts for hire The twistings the hillocks, the mud! I cannot think that in the whole civilized world there have ever been any roads comparable with those of Peking only thirty years ago I tried sitting outside my cart on the shafts, and letting Sing Su bear the worse torment within, but in the city it was not seemly for a woman to be thus exposed to public gaze I had to endure the torments and the cracks on the head again While still cogitating why the Foreign Ministers, and more especially their wives, did not openly rebel against such a rattling of their bones, we came to the street of perhaps the greatest interest to foreigners. Legation Street was the only road in good order We passed the French, German, Russian, and American Legations We turned up "Customs Lane," where was the house and large garden of Sir Robert Hart, whom we had left at Pei tsang ho, and the houses of his more prominent members of staff, one being his chief secretary and our host The entrance to those houses and down that lane were as bad as any yet encountered!

Our host's greeting, characteristically breezy and sincere, was charming in our ears In the peace of his enclosure, or compound, we were soon able to collect our scattered senses and rest our bruised limbs

PEKING was empty of its usual foreign inhabitants, many still away in their temples in the Western Hills or at Pei-tai-ho Still, our friend collected an interesting company at dinner for us: members of the British Legation and of the consular service We went also to see Dr Morrison, in his unhealthy house, a one-storey dwelling in insalubrious quarters He complained of ill health, and no wonder He talked of going overland to Hankow, also of a visit to England, which all eventuated the following year Dr Morrison had a keen and a fine face, and it was well to see him in his own environment, and not only on the Sunny Lodge veranda at the seaside He told us he spent £300 a year on buying books on China, and he bought every book that came out in English on China The next time I visited him, in 1910, he had built not only a house for himself but an adjoining library for his books Indeed he made soon a still more valuable collection, for he married the sensitive, slim, and gentle girl who came out to be his librarian and secretary We were not surprised at the news after we had seen her looking charming one evening in a severely cut white satin dress and with a fillet of green ivy in her dark waving hair Before his death his collection of valuable books passed into the hands of the Japanese, it was said for the sum of £40,000 It escaped destruction during the earthquake, but alas, both Dr Morrison and his wife died in England at too early an age

In Peking lived an American friend of Sing Su's, his former guide to the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs Dr Lowry came in the evening and sketched out our route, while our host groaned sympathetically at what we should be called to endure To-day one goes easily enough by rail almost to the Tombs—unless, as on my last visit to Peking, contending armies occupy the passes either side of the Wall and one cannot go at all

In spite of fatigue after my jolting I struggled to see something of Peking the Glamorous With Gracie Campbell, aged fourteen, as guide, I braved the frightful odours ' The City of-the-South seemed the acme of cleanliness compared with Peking before the Boxer *émeute* Many of the foreigners rode horses, if only to avoid walking around ponds of black slimy mire, and



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to pass quickly the open conveniences. News reached me later from Gracie when I returned South, which throws light on the sanitary conditions.

"Your letter found me in bed with typhoid fever. When I was better my sister Maggie began with smallpox, and when she was well Gina went down with chicken-pox, followed later by my brother Archie who was ill with gastric fever."

Across the road from us lived a Chinese prince, or rather had lived, for he had just died, and had had the biggest funeral Peking had seen for a long time. The catafalque was so large that a house had to be taken down to let it pass.

"But it was re-erected," said Gracie to me.

To tiffin were invited Dr. Morrison and Mr. Bredon, who was later to be knighted and the successor of Sir Robert Hart in the Chinese Customs. He was something over fifty, grey-headed, genial, and a good companion. Doubtless because of the presence of Sing Su, the progress of Christianity in China came under discussion.

"I rarely express an opinion about it," remarked Mr. Bredon. "I am not in a position to judge. And I 've been led to keep my mouth closed partly from having heard people who know even less than myself express very decided opinions."

Afterwards our host told us that that was exactly what Dr. Morrison had done! So there may have been a point to that arrow. It was, at any rate, a great opportunity for Sing Su, of which he did not hesitate to avail himself or they to listen. Nor do I think the vital question suffered at his hands, or that Mr. Summers or even Mr. Ting, the ex-opium-smoking scholar, would have dissented from what he said.

In the afternoon Gracie's mother called on me, after visiting a young man fresh in the Legation and down with typhoid. He said his nurses were poisoning him, and that if he could only have his room papered blue all would be well. It was more than sad to think of some one's twenty-one-year-old son so ill, only six months out from home, and not likely to recover. Then the cart was loaned to me, and with Sing Su walking beside me we bumped our way to Dr. Lowry's, and thence to see some of the sights of the capital. The lower part of the old Observatory was built by Kublai Khan in 1296. The interesting

water-clock, or clepsydra, consists of five copper cisterns placed one above the other, from which the water gradually drips, measuring time A dark room contains a long slab marked out, and from a tiny hole in the wall the sun shines on it once a day, indicating the hour The more recent portion was on an elevation fifty feet high, to which we climbed a wearying number of steps It adjoins the city wall, and was made by the great and wise Kang-hsi in 1674, who was assisted in this observatory work by a Catholic Father, Verbiest Though the half dozen instruments on an open platform have been exposed for nearly three hundred years to the deadly cold and frost, below zero, of the Peking winters, as well as its fierce summers, they are in excellent preservation Splendid specimens they are of Chinese bronze, and the exquisite dragons of the supports are Chinese workmanship of highest art The only instrument not of Chinese manufacture was a large azimuth presented to the then Emperor by Louis the Fourteenth of France, but in comparison its workmanship was plain and unadorned There were instruments for taking latitude, longitude, altitude, an azimuth, a quadrant, sextant, sun dial a large celestial globe all under the open sky on the Peking wall Some of them were taken to Germany after 1900, but they came back to their old home of the centuries after the Great European War

From the city wall Peking is a sight to stir the blood One passes unobserved its numerous trees in the streets from the wall they look a forest In the distance running in a straight line from north to south, are the Imperial Palaces, towering above the rest; their roofs are covered with the so called yellow tiles which look almost red In their grounds rises the Coal Hill, doubtless from the legend that hidden in it is a store of coal reserved for times of siege, but which the Chinese themselves call Prospect Hill On a tree on the hill the last Emperor of the Ming dynasty hanged himself when all his great officials had fled and the rebels had entered the city through treachery His last message he wrote with his blood on his garments, runs the tale

'My virtue is small, therefore I have incurred the anger of Heaven, and the rebels have captured my capital Let them disfigure my corpse, but let them not kill my people"



Photo by G. V. Kitson, H.B.M. Consular Service

A Camel of North China
A prince in his winter coat — with his retainer

His favourite adviser Wang could not outlive his royal master, and killed himself close by. If you would read how the next dynasty, the Manchus, came to an end, with the enthronement by a woman of a little five-year-old boy, let Sing Su tell you in one of his books on Chinese subjects!

Open also to our view that dry beautiful sunny bygone day was the Examination Hall, which we defy any who know China to view with other than sympathetic eyes The Hall was a huge collection of cells, like a hive, and capable, it was said, of holding thousands of students It was known to have had 1700 men confined within its narrow spaces for three days and three nights at a stretch, every student in a cell to himself All were alike, one yard wide, four feet long, and ten feet high There were no doors, and each had a *kong* or great water jar Down the centre of the rows ran a flagged road with a high tower round which a watchman tramped during examinations The cells in their straight monotonous rows, each with its narrow passage in front, now grass grown, were used in the triennial examinations During the three days no student who had come in was allowed to go out, nor were the gates opened An anxious time for the horde of literary aspirants, for upon the results their future status and employment in the then Chinese Civil Service depended! One mourned the amount of time, ability, and strength spent in the attainment of what, to the practical Westerner, seemed impractical learning The men who came for examination in the capital were the pick of the provincial students, and the best of these again might become Hanlins or Academicians

Near by were the public granaries, too often, if report was true, the chosen opportunity of peculation on the part of mandarins Is it Peking which has been called "the city of magnificent distances"? It might well be so, for it is twenty-six square miles has round it a huge wall of tremendous thickness, varying from thirty to fifty feet high Its sixteen gates add greatly to the impressive scene, for over each rises a massive watch tower, a hundred feet high, the brick surface of which is relieved by square apertures for possible cannons

Nor is Peking one, but a combination of four cities The main divisions are two The Tatar City adjoins the Chinese

City, having been built by Kublai Khan, son of the still more famous Genghis Khan, the Mongol Conqueror, who in his day overran much of the known world This Tatar City was enlarged by the third Ming Emperor and made what it still remains despite the fall of dynasties and the inauguration of a republic Close outside its gates grew up a large Chinese settlement, which in course of time was enclosed in a wall Inside the Tatar City is another, the Imperial City, with its own huge gates and lofty strong walls Inside this again, as if to make security trebly secure, is a third high-walled enclosure of two miles containing the Emperor's Palaces, sealed alike against Chinese and foreigners save on official business

Little did I think that in a few more years I also should be living, and with Da-ling but without Sing Su, in that Imperial or Purple City! Possibly the accompanying outline may help to a better understanding of the topographical plan of one of the most interesting cities of the world But to a few Peking is more than that It is the city in which they choose to live out their leisurely lives in preference to every inducement the West can offer, and despite its periodic blinding dust storms and its severe winters

Between 1891 and 1898 Sing Su had found many changes The intervening years have found greater still, of which you may read in books on modern China and which is what Da ling knows of it Now, the places of beauty and interest are open to the traveller Then, most were forbidden ground If a traveller were willing to spend money and risk a severe mauling, he might, for instance, with patience worm his way into a few Sing Su thus saw the noble Confucian Hall and the Hall of the Classics where the ancient learning cut on great stone tablets is to be preserved for all time Seven years before, Sing Su and Dr Lowry had been invited to visit the Lama Temple by one of its priests, a friendly man When they arrived and entered the open doors they were met, not by that priest, whom they never saw again but by a crowd of monks who rushed at them, brandishing long Mongolian horse-whips They stood their ground, thinking of their priestly host, and succeeded in entering, to find every door of the various buildings closed against them A group of scowling monks fought for Sing Su's camera, and he

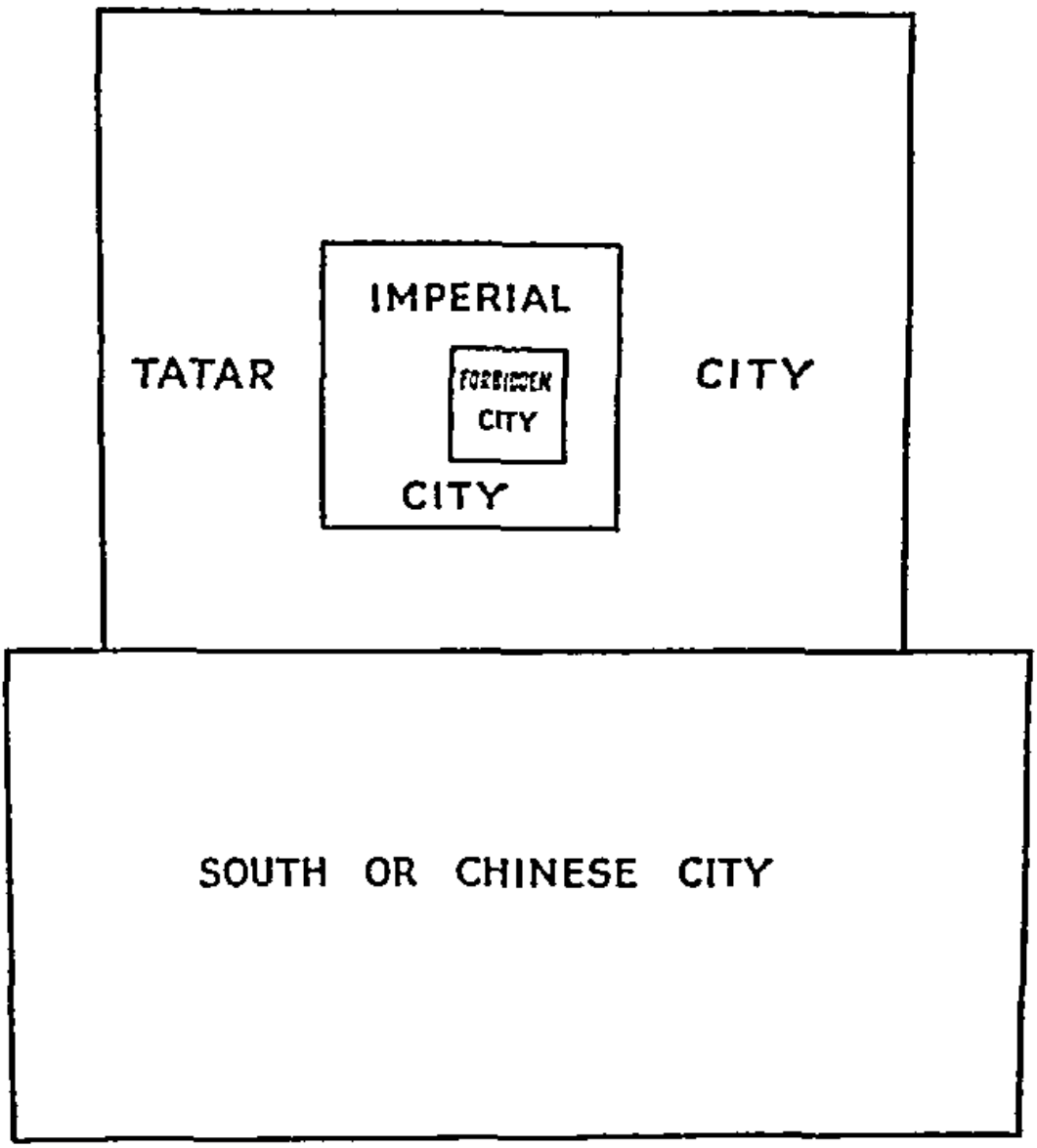


Diagram of Peking

only just saved it; after which they left the place. They were fortunate in escaping so lightly. Some months before, an American, Dr. Gilbert Reid, who stood six and a half feet high and was strong, fared worse. When they assaulted him, he quoted to them their own classics, which inculcate hospitality to strangers. But as he retreated to the gate they threw him out head-first into the dust of the road! The privilege of seeing those temples, of feeling Mongolian whips slashing about me, was therefore denied me in 1898. But I have seen them since. The last time I went to the Lama Temple, the abbot was mourning the departure over-night of some hundreds of the Christian general, Feng Yu-hsiang's soldiers, so orderly had they been.

"And we have so few priests now, we are lonely," said he pathetically.

CHAPTER XXXI THE GRANDEUR THAT WAS CHINA

A JOURNEY to the Great Wall of China where it passes closest to Peking at the Nankow Pass amongst the mountains between the Chihli and Shansi provinces, and to the neighbouring Tombs of the dead Emperors of the Ming dynasty, is an education and an illumination in itself To me the journey was a revelation, a portent A lover of China already, those two great works made me an admirer indeed; for they proclaim that mighty indigenous ideas existed ages before the West came bursting in upon her like an overwhelming flood These monuments of former and inherent genius and skill—and there are many others in China of equal brilliance—show what China can still do, if she will

"Alone I built them," she can say, and point her finger

"What a man hath done, that he can do again" we reply

A nation cannot make progress unless its eyes look right on and forward Yet surely it can move forward with greater confidence and serener courage if, like China, it has the impetus of a mighty past pushing forward from behind

So when on a bright September morning our little cavalcade gathered outside the house in Customs Lane, my heart rose despite the promise of four or five hard days' travel ahead The gloriously clear air of Peking was sharpened by the refreshing touch of autumn With jokes and happy laughter our host set us off We left behind the Bread maker, nothing loth to dally in the metropolis, and borrowed a servant who, though a Southerner, was more inured to Northern ways He needed this inurement in very truth Hours and days of sitting upon a donkey, with its Chinese pack as saddle, over the outrageous roads, and, when the rain came, ploughing through seas of black mud, were to be his and our portion for much of the way The railway took me that journey in a very few hours some years later Yet I do not now regret having visited those mighty works in the same primitive way as their originators, though I almost regretted it at times then, especially when, coming back, our mule failed time after time to clamber the steep slimy bank to avoid a bottomless pit and kept falling backward to its edge with the heavy cart to drag him down!

The countryside was very different from the South There were apple trees, buckwheat, and Indian corn We met strings of mules laden with walnuts and grapes Droves of sheep came along, raising such thick dust as made me flee in dismay Natural that an Eastern shepherd should go before his sheep! He would be choked otherwise We met two and three thousand of them at once, herded by perhaps a dozen shepherds with blankets slung round their shoulders Once more we ate delicious mutton chops, despised in the South, but bought in a clean butcher's shop here In one inn the keeper, being Mohammedan and therefore eating beef, made our servant cook the mutton on a different stove from his own As for the mules, they showed careful breeding and were much finer than the under sized, hard-worked ponies I saw lucerne with its clover-coloured flowers, but in those days did not know it, for the West had little knowledge of its excellent feeding qualities

The on march of the lordly camels enchanted me Processions of fifteen to thirty-six of them would be bound for Mongolia Magical! Each stalked along with its sheep-like face and drooping underlip like the spout of a jug—"a prince in winter, a beggar in summer" as to the thickness of its fur I never failed to smile when their keepers took a stiff broom and brushed them down as if they were carpets Their hair is cut but once a year, in the third moon—April The good hair sold for about 200 cash a catty then Every ten days it is advisable to give a camel that which he loves, a meal of dry salt, and nearly a pound and a half at a time Some that we saw were off to the grass lands, enormous tracts in Mongolia, others journeyed to Siberia, carrying fruit, wool grain, and steel in their side panniers They travel best by night, twenty miles in the dark, resting and browsing on the grass of the roadsides by day They cost from five to ten pounds apiece and each carries four hundred pounds weight At one spot a hundred were drinking in a stream Sometimes they filled the road and I became a little nervous Some lay on the road and showed their big teeth while chewing the cud I learned about them from the keeper of one drove resting in a yard a kindly man, who made one of his camels lie down and insisted on my stroking it

"They are gentleness itself," he assured me, "for even when they spit at you they will do you no harm!"

Every drove has a bell attached to one of its party a handsome deep-ringing bell which I coveted in vain, for it was too heavy and dear to carry away It suited the serene majesty of the great creature Our little donkeys were, on the other hand, well supplied with bells, fastened, twenty of them, on a leather band round the neck, and I bought a couple In the night, trying to sleep on the hard brick built platform which serves North China as a bed, and also fighting to rid myself of many unwanted companions of the night, the sound of the camel bell would come, like a ship's bell, very pleasantly to my ears

White sheep with black intelligent faces, camels date trees brown plains with scattered villages and apple trees seas of grassy hills, bluebells growing wild, and cultivated rich orange French marigolds, magnificent cliffs and gorges such is my mental picture of the way to the Great Wall at Nankow We met a woman on a donkey, with a boy running alongside—for all donkey drivers in North China must spend their days running alongside She wore blue cotton clothing, and had stuck a red flower in her raven hair We met two Mongolian priests in red robes who called to us an unknown greeting We met a party of foreigners—we found out later the American Minister and his daughters In Anglo-Saxon fashion they uttered no word and only gave us a long look We caught up two missionary ladies who proffered us cheery suggestions of better inns Sing Su is always more punctilious than I, and it was in spite of his protests I ventured inside one cheap "restaurant" of those wild parts and found it very entertaining Small tables filled the room, at which a noisy sociable nondescript crowd ate and drank I was not molested but could not judge of the quality of the food or of the remarks about myself

'She is not very decent she does not wear a jacket' some one in the street had already said meaning I wore a blouse So I had complied with what was evidently the feeling about women's dress in the locality, and put on a jacket

We came to the Tombs of the Emperors first Thirteen great enclosures there are scattered amongst the valleys in their amphitheatre of the hills Enormous arches and gateways give

ingress—after one has banged at the red-painted gate, and called aloud for the gatekeeper occupied in cultivating his persimmons or millet Dark green cypress trees form the background for bridges and pillars of carved white marble Huge columns of teak, supported on bases of black marble, uphold the painted roofs of the buildings and pavilions Whence came that teak? Surely not from Burma in the days of even more exhausting travel than we endured on our expedition? I never heard of any one who visited all those thirteen tombs in the silence of the hills We saw what is supposed to be the most magnificent, the Tomb of Yung Lo It was he who enlarged Peking and rebuilt the Altars to Heaven and to Earth It was he who had a mighty encyclopaedia made by his scholars, which work would have perished entirely in the flames lit by the Boxers had not two foreigners at the risk of their lives salvaged some portions To Dr Morrison and Sir Edmund Backhouse does China owe it that any of Yung Lo's encyclopaedia is in existence

"How quickly Chinese dynasties came to an end!" quoth I

"Not nearly so quickly as ours did!" retorted Sing Su

Yet despite the grandeur of the Tombs, dirt and dust were working havoc, and wild plants were destroying with their roots the beautifully laid platforms of huge bricks and tiles For the Chinese do not go to see the Tombs of their dead Emperors it is the foreigner who goes to marvel at those sepulchres The late Dowager Empress spent untold millions on her tomb to the east of Peking It is sad if a nation's beauty is in her burial-places more than in the lives, aims, and ambition of her living people While the present Chinese republic might be concentrating its resources on succouring the famishing and educating its children, it has built a huge and costly tomb for its latest dead hero, Sun Yat-sen History repeats itself

One wonders if some day archæologists will find some confirmation of Noah's Ark in China! The approach to the Tombs is up a long grassy avenue between stone animals, huge and realistic In pairs two by two they stand and they kneel; two pairs of elephants, of camels, of horses, and so on Spaced far apart, they are grand, or amusing The elephant was fifteen feet high by fourteen feet long Stone ministers of state attend their monarch, with hands on breast, ineffably calm

After the avenue of animals come the great enclosures, the mighty arches, the throne-room with its empty yellow-covered chair, the courtyards and cypresses Then, lastly, comes the enormous mound wherein lies Yung Lo's body One feels the Emperor is but a speck in this immensity What innumerable aids man needs to make himself seem of any importance in the universe!

Some miles more of donkey riding, till I felt flayed and we climbed up the gorges to the Great Wall seventy miles from Peking It cost a million lives and was mainly built two centuries before Christ, to keep out the Tatar hordes, which it partially did It runs nearly 1250 miles almost in a straight line for part of its course—this "myriad mile Wall," as the Chinese name it The interior is rubble and earth but it is faced with bricks as good to-day as when made those centuries ago large and excellent bricks, the labour in making which by the million appals the mind, for they weigh between twenty and sixty pounds a brick Jagged summits of hills sharp against the sky show the wall winding up precipitous steeps At places the steps along its battlemented platform are so perpendicular I could not see the step below without overbalancing The Wall climbs one peak five thousand feet high When Sir John Bowring Governor of Hong Kong and friend of Palmerston, came North to Peking, our host in Customs Lane, then a youngster, had been given the privilege of taking him this pilgrimage to see the Tombs and the Wall The old man author of some hymns we still sing one of which is "In the Cross of Christ I glory," gazed and gazed, the tears rolling down his cheeks

"Excuse me," he said, turning to the younger man who had all his life in China before him, "I shall never look on it or its like again"

Nor did he But both he and his then young companion are now in the Temple not made with hands

Outside the Wall was the way to Mongolia Two clusters of inns for Mongolian camel-drivers were there in Nankow whose narrow streets with bad ruts reminded me of our sixteenth-century England These Mongolian inns were but cone shaped mat-sheds The next time I visited the Wall was 1912, in May, a few months after the Chinese Revolution, but already in

1898 a revolution had begun, and telegraph poles Russia-ward lined the route. One gaunt pole stood on the Wall itself.

We had to start homewards, though we could have lingered indefinitely. Then began the most wretched journey on land for me that ever I undertook. The rain was so incessant it soaked through my two raincoats, and I was forced to take refuge in the cart. We mounted into the rutty fields to avoid the dangers of the deeply flooded road, and I feared often the cart would overturn—not an unknown fatal contingency. The carter stirred one pool to see if we could pass through, but touched no bottom with his long stick. The worst torture was passing over a famous but interminable stone bridge, once well laid but now a lamentable toss of disjected boulders worn all shapes by the carts of centuries. The carter was heroic in his labours, easing and pushing wheels over and around the stony sea. I have never been so near giving up myself to despair as we plunged from pit to pit or hung with one wheel up a boulder. The carter became my friend. He seemed to possess but one coat, and was soon soaking; yet he had been truly sympathetic to me when I seized his arm at one ultra-bad spot.

Night began to fall. We passed through a beautiful and celebrated gateway, carved marvellously with buddhas and lotus-flowers in 1345. We hurried, for we longed for our home in Customs Lane, where we were to find friends at a dinner-party, lights, warm food, comfortable chairs, and beds. We knew the gates of Peking shut at sundown. Still, when is sundown? In our own City-of-the-South we could pay a dollar to the gate-keeper, call out our names, and be let in after the gates had been shut. I was ready to die of weariness. The city walls of Peking loomed before us. We rattled up the stone-set incline that brought us face to face with the huge high gate.

Shut.

Never a glimmer of light shining through the massive studded doors, or the smallest crevice where we could squeeze through or make our voice heard. Two armed soldiers stood in the gloom

"Will a dollar open the gate?" asked Sing Su.

"Impossible. If we opened, our heads would pay the penalty." Here, then, in China was one place where bribes

were not taken We learned later that the keys are not entrusted to the gatekeeper even, but are taken to an official in the city

There we both stood in the dark, a couple of bedraggled pilgrims, deadly tired, shaken to pieces by a springless cart, at the towering, forbidding closed back door of the Imperial city of Peking We felt as if we at last understood the meaning of some awful words

" And the door was shut "

Against the mandate of the Son of Heaven in his own capital there was no appeal It was one of the most dramatic events in my life I understood the desperation of the outcast Honesty demands the confession that though we had made great efforts we had not made every effort We had dallied over a comfortable lunch, and again at tea So the door was shut We splashed our way by the dim light from the candles of shops We found at long last a wretched shelter in a Chinese inn of a third rate type, but were glad to be under cover Our servant declared himself ill, not to our surprise, we covered him with rugs and did our best with hot drinks, also hiring a wadded coverlet for him At crack of dawn we were the first to enter the desired city

ONE day we set out for Pi Yun Ssŭ, the Temple of the Pearly Cloud As we passed through the city, coolies were scattering with shovels yellow earth on the roads Not too much of it, but yellow is the colour of the Ruler, and the Emperor was to pass that way Marshal Chang Tso lin, in 1926, when he declared himself chief of the state, entered Peking over yellow earth also!

The Pearly Cloud Temple is grouped around a noble edifice of white marble carved into a myriad buddhas and lotuses, and is a joy to behold in the charming situation of hills, silver pines, mellow courtyards with pomegranates and persimmons Eight hundred years old, its great platform, which is on a base a hundred feet long, lifts its sixty feet of delicate carving into the pure air a noble conception In the monastery attached are halls with innumerable figures of buddhas, goddesses of mercy, and disciples Many steps and stairways we climbed Here was the Hall of the Eight Hundred Gods Before some of the shrines hung beautiful lacquer lamps One fine cloisonné and gold censer was two hundred and fifty years old Not far off rose a pagoda, also a Buddhist creation, its thirteen tiers roofed with porcelain tiles

Perhaps it was the beauty we had seen which dazzled our eyes, for we proceeded to lose ourselves, and quite seriously, on the Western Hills after we left the Temple precincts We were to stay with some American friends, and were misdirected here and redirected there by villagers till we met by chance at last a fellow countryman, surprised to see us, and were put right Very lonely seemed our dwelling for the night up in those hills We began with the door of our sleeping-room open, but Sing Su presently closed it, as we had heard tales of wolves By six I was out on the veranda, revelling in the lovely light on the plain below and the lilac mist enfolding distant Peking

It was on that journey I first came across a Chinese woman doing the cross stitch which is nowadays so pleasing a branch of Chinese needlecraft A young country girl was plying her needle and thread industriously as we sauntered near her little cot. She showed me a pretty and quaint design in cross-stitch



Photo by G. V. Ellison, H.M. Consular Service

The Bird fancier
He takes his pet out for an airing

in various shades of blue We soon arranged that she should work an afternoon tea cloth for me, and in course of time there came to our far away Southern city the beautiful results on grass cloth

I never knew the name of that unlettered hill girl, but I still prize the work of her fingers And in these days cross stitch is one of the means by which our girls in the Southern city also earn their right to live Their deft fingers work out charming designs for others' delectation

Mostly we were treated courteously, but, as in the South, not invariably Once I saw a man deliberately put up his arm and cover his nose with his sleeve on our approach Our effluvium would offend his nostrils, it seemed Once a stone unexpectedly hit me in the middle of my back hurting my mind more than my body Yet we would see grown Chinese men taking their birds out airing, not only sitting beside them in their cages to encourage and enjoy their trills, but carrying wands to the tip of which a little bird was attached by a string to his wing The bird would take a short flight, then come back to his perch on the wand

The Great Bell Temple is another famous spot, and later we compared its bell with that other great one in Moscow The Russians failed to hang their bell, and one marvelled how the Chinese had attained their object, for the Chinese bell is 34 feet in circumference and weighs 120 000 pounds! Mongolian characters are written about its brim, but Chinese characters cover the inside being extracts from two famous Buddhist Sutras One of the Sutras is the Lotus of the Wonderful Law, and only last year Sing Su published a translation of it in English! The bell was cast in 1406 in the reign of great Yung Lo We stood beneath it, but did not feel inclined to linger there! We passed on to a granary near by Clean and golden was the corn and yellow millet lying in heaps, which a donkey was helping to grind

There was the Yellow Temple also which contains over thirty halls within itself, each a hundred feet long and forty high and each in its walled in grass-grown court and embowered in cypress and fir trees Its most interesting erection is the Dagoba erected in memory of a pope of Tibetan Buddhism who

was invited to China by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung This holy man set out in 1770 from Tibet with an escort of fifteen hundred men The Emperor held him in such honour that he travelled the enormous distance as far as Si ning in Kansu province to welcome him He was lodged in the Yellow Temple, and there too in 1910 the Dalai Lama of Tibet and his two hundred retainers were similarly lodged

But the Lama of 1779 died of smallpox the year after his arrival, thus attaining buddha hood speedily He was said to have had a premature birth, and marvels were told of him His body was enclosed in a golden coffin and returned to Lhassa, but a beautiful white marble memorial was erected to him in this Yellow Temple near Peking Its centre plinth is eighty feet high, and has a gilded cone Scenes from the prelate's life are carved on the panels, one of which depicts a lion weeping and rubbing the tears from his eyes with his paws—strangely reminding one of various monuments in Westminster Abbey of about the same period! Nowadays the yellow robed priests complain that the republic has turned anti religious and the state no longer pays them a cash The roofs are falling and they go hungry and ill clad In old days the Emperor kept them and the temple In similar fashion the old dwellings of the Manchu banner men at the gates of the Forbidden City are now more tumble-down than ever They too received their meat from the throne

Compressed into our last day and a half was a visit to the unpretentious workshops where the lovely cloisonné ware is cunningly fashioned by the fingers of men as delicate as those of women Probably the art originally came from the Arabs about 1200 during the time of the Mongols, and was revived two or three centuries later under the Ming Emperors A self-sacrificing man friend also led us to a huge bazaar, or market, miles away, but I was disappointed to find the Chinese pottery too dear to permit my carrying off more than a couple of specimens only one of which remains intact

The sights on the journey thither appalled me We were of course riding donkeys and the awful condition of the numerous beggars as they sat or lay on the bridges, almost near enough to touch us, was bad enough to infect all Peking with noisome pesti-

more enduring, in the hearts of living men and women, and to the glory of a yet greater Son of Heaven.

We left Peking in much perplexity. Three weeks before, while at Pei-tai-ho, when Sing Su had called on Sir Robert Hart, he had found him in a blaze of excitement.

"Look at this! And this! And this!" he cried, holding out for Sing Su's inspection a sheaf of Edicts in Chinese writing, just promulgated by the young Emperor, Kuang Hsü. They ordered immediate and drastic reforms in Government policy and education.

"I never expected to see this day," said Sir Robert, with shining eyes, and deeply moved. Truly the reward of his life's work appeared to be at hand. Alas! China, which was to have been remodelled with such reckless speed, was soon to be plunged into a deeper morass.

The last evening with our friend in Peking was likewise sufficiently startling. There were just four of us at dinner: Sir Robert's general and his private secretaries, and our two selves. Suddenly, without a word of preparation, the delightful young private secretary sprang a surprise on us which had come to his hand an hour or two earlier.

"To-morrow," said he, "the Dowager Empress takes over the reins of government."

For a moment the drop of a pin could have been heard, so dead was the silence. At once we mentally visualized the overthrow of the Emperor and the end of those astonishing reforms which he and all of us desired for the country.

"Nonsense, man!" our host burst out.

He thereby revealed how completely in the dark he and everybody else had been as to the portentous history being so swiftly enacted in our midst. The private secretary was rather nettled at this incredulous reception of his grave news. I can see his indignant face.

"But I tell you it *is* so!" he emphasized.

Not another word passed on the subject the whole evening. We were nonplussed, stricken dumb by such a retrograde step, and could only ask ourselves, "What next?" That the news was all too true we learned early next morning. When Sing Su went into the Customs Secretariat to bid good-bye to one and

another, he found them excitedly reading the dowager lady's Proclamation It was to the effect that the Emperor had "requested" her to reascend the Throne, because the onerous duties connected therewith had proved too much for his health! A specious platitude which deceived no one Thus on September 21, 1898, while Chinese and Europeans slept, around us in Peking had been plot and counter plot There had been secret manœuvring of armed forces and strong guards hurried in from the Summer Palace at the instance of the Dowager Empress to seize the too-well intentioned Emperor, then some thirty years old Apparently a very successful *coup d état* to the credit of the lady

But if ever a nation's affairs were fatally mismanaged surely they were those of the Celestial Empire that autumn The Emperor, in his passion for reform, had many able supporters They now found the hand of the Empress heavy upon them She banished the Prime Minister, Weng Tung ho, the uncle of Li Cheng a young friend of ours whom Da ling has written about in books which continue my tale A considerable number of highly connected young men eager, yet apprehensive for their country and anxious for its betterment, had to flee for their lives She seized seven of the most brilliant of these young scholars and beheaded them *en bloc* in Peking

"We die!" cried one of them before his head fell "But others will rise to fill our place"

The Emperor was imprisoned for the rest of his sad life on an island in the lake of the Forbidden City Nor does it seem as if her vengeful spirit were ever appeased Two years later, in 1900 when she fled from the expedition sent by Western countries to relieve the besieged Legations she carried the young man with her, but not before it is said having caused his favourite wife to be thrown down a palace well and drowned Whether the Emperor would have had any chance if he had persistently tried to take his august Aunt with him in his reforms instead of trying to have her imprisoned as was the case who can say? She abrogated his reforms but the failure of the Boxer Movement to forward her hopes of crushing the foreigners brought about her own change of attitude

It was perhaps chiefly the influence of great scholars like

Chang Chih-tung, and as the result of his advocacy in his famous treatise "Learn!", that made the Empress Tzu-Hsi alter the entire scheme of education In 1907 she went further, issuing decrees introducing a constitutional system, from municipal government to an advisory Parliament These reforms were just beginning to work when she died, by a curious coincidence the day after the Emperor, and the Revolution of 1911 overthrew her dynasty

Foremost amongst the reformers in Peking had been a brilliant young man called K'ang Yu-wei He had been admitted to interviews with the Emperor which were probably the origin of the Reform Edicts Scenting danger, the Emperor sent him a secret message

"Go instantly to Shanghai," was the order, "and start a newspaper"

But K'ang Yu-wei saw no reason for such haste, and delayed

"Why have you disobeyed my command?" came another urgent message

Three times the Emperor had to send his friend even more imperative orders, till at last K'ang Yu wei felt compelled to start So unsuspicious was he of the deadly peril in which he stood, that when his ship called at Chefoo he went sauntering ashore, little recking that the telegram ordering his seizure and immediate decapitation had reached there before him His escape was due to the fact that the official in charge of the administration at Chefoo had gone inland, and no lesser official dared open the secret envelope

On leaving the Customs Secretariat on September 22 1898, Sing Su and I said good-bye to our friend and host Him we were to see again, but never the lovely wife we had left at Pei tai ho, for both were among the besieged in the Legation in 1900 and she ultimately died as the result of the hardships and privation then endured

Arriving early at the station, we took our seats in the train for Tientsin We waited an hour, but there came no welcome whistle of departure We waited interminably; all inquiries in vain No one could or would tell us the cause of the delay It was when we reached Shanghai that we learned that the train was kept waiting whilst Peking was being searched for K'ang

Yu wei! Thanks to the Emperor, he had left the day before and was twenty-four hours ahead of his foes As we sat grumbling at the unconscionable waste of time, a cheerful face attached to six feet four inches of stalwart manhood appeared at the carriage window, with no explanation, but asking if he could do anything for us This was an Australian who had superintended the laying of this part of the line, and who kept it in repair He held out some hope of a train leaving at four in the afternoon

"Come along on my trolley worked by my coolies to my house at Feng tai, five miles away, and you will be more comfortable," was his invitation

We gratefully accepted the Samaritan offer We spent an interesting time listening to the difficulties there had been to overcome in making the line, one of which was the number of false graves made by some Chinese in the hope of claiming the compensation paid for the disturbance of an ancestor! We were sorry to leave him at four

Parts of our passage down the coast to Shanghai were charming, particularly just before we reached the port of Chefoo, At times the steamer went close in to the shore Stretches of hill and precipitous grassy slopes swept down to the edge of the sea, with precipices now and again whose shadows were so sharply defined that they might have been cut by a sabre Boats with red and brown sails flecked the sea Rocky islets reared bold fronts or tapered to sharp needles This rock-bound coast can be very stormy, as I have experienced, but on this occasion it was a dream of calm beauty On the one side were the scarred and stratified rocks, on the other was the limitless ocean sparkling in the brilliant sun, while tiny islands on the horizon vied with bigger ones close at hand

In Chefoo everybody was on the qui vive, the report being that the Emperor was dead The previous night four men-of-war had hurried off to Taku at the mouth of the Tientsin River, and we now saw a Russian man-of war getting up steam, ready for any emergency We arrived home in our City-of the-South on September 29

'What a pity you cannot always look as you do now!' exclaimed a friend During the last four years Sing Su had only

once been out of our port. Peking had been delightfully cool and fresh when we left it.

"Would we could all live and work there!" we said.

We came back, a thousand miles South, to damp depressing heat, and seemed to be enduring a second summer. The thermometer was 98° on board our little cockleshell steamer from Shanghai. Though nearing October, the temperature was as trying as July. To the Chinese our three months' absence had seemed an age.

"Did you see Da-ling and Sea-borne whilst away?" my women friends asked quite simply of me!

As for K'ang Yu-wei, he would seem to have borne a charmed life. A message similar to that sent to the official at Chefoo came also to the Taotai in Shanghai.

"Decapitate the man on arrival," it ran.

I suppose his arrest on the foreign Bund of Shanghai might have caused international complications. Another message arrived there at the British consulate at the same time; and it must be admitted that British sympathy lay with the reformer. The outcome was that a British consul went down in his launch to Woosung, twelve miles below Shanghai, and waylaid K'ang Yu-wei's steamer. Going aboard, he warned him of the fate awaiting him if he proceeded further. It resulted in the consul taking him in his launch to yet another British steamer starting for Hong-Kong, where he remained for some time in safety. But a British gunboat shadowed his vessel all the way there.

It would appear to have been Great Britain's lot to play an active part in rescuing China's reformers! In a different fashion, but as effectively, she rescued Sun Yat-sen when held a prisoner, doubtless with unpleasant intent, in a room in the top storey of the Chinese Legation in London. I have been in the room. Again, when his own Canton rose against him, it was a British steamer that took him away to Shanghai. Once I was at a small meeting of China's friends in London at which was present the consul who accompanied K'ang Yu-wei from one British steamer to another at Woosung. The consul was invited to give us his story of the intriguing incident. He refused to pander to us, shaking a wise old head in the negative.

IX SHANSI—WEST OF THE HILLS

CHAPTER XXXIII TAIYUANFU—CITY-OF THE-GREAT PLAIN

(1)

WHAT a heavy load both mind and body can carry, if only a man begin young enough and the burden grows with his growth and is not thrust too suddenly upon him! It was so with Sing Su Activities in the City of the-South had multiplied year by year, by leaps and bounds, but happily colleagues, Chinese and Western, fell in with his methods of procedure, and the end of a quarter of a century found us expanding in every direction

Then Sing Su began to flag I would find him stretched flat on the floor of his quiet upstairs study Not that he had fallen there, but because he found he could recover more quickly thus from the band of steel across his brow and from the unpleasant tremors, the result of the frequent attacks of malaria, which shook him

" It means a furlough of years in England," he admitted with a sigh

Then one day on the wires of our newly installed telegraph came a short message which for the moment, staggered us

' Will you accept the Presidency of the Shansi Imperial University ? " it ran

Our first thought was How could we leave the absorbing interests in the city of our love and the care of dear people who had conclusively proved the sincerity of their faith by their sacrifices ? Other questions came surging Had Sing Su's leadership and diversity of work in the South been of a sufficiently liberal character to enable him effectively to guide a modern Chinese University in the North ? Would the accept ance of such a proposal take us into unplumbed depths—if not out of our depths ?

But another side could not be ignored The climate of North China is all that the climate of the South is not The one is the antithesis of the other The summers if hot are short, and the long frozen up winters are exceedingly bracing and very dry Such a climate would be a finer restorative than England It

the Shansi plateau from the Northern Chinese plains This plateau is surrounded by mountains, and in one corner stands the large walled provincial capital of Taiyuanfu—which means the City-of the Great-Plain While yet a day's journey away, the goods train incontinently came to a stop and left us stranded by a roadside Two mule *shen tzŭ*, however, awaited us, and in these primitive oscillating conveyances we first entered the gates of the city, and then the gates of the University itself My *shen-tzŭ* consisted of two long poles, in the middle and between which a lightly made structure was fastened on which it was easier to recline than sit Between the poles, back and front, and in close proximity to me, were harnessed two mules with ropes Good enough for an experience, but preferably not to be repeated

Had we been transplanted to the planet Mars, should we have found ourselves in a much more different world than this new province ? The people are tall, heavily built, less alert than the Southerners more reliable, says rumour In September they were still in normal garb, but as winter approaches they clothe themselves in sheepskins and goatskins wearing the long wool outside, so that they are transformed into two-legged animals The soil is vastly different from the South This remarkable composition, called loess is yellow grey, and on the cliffs looks as hard as rock But it is very friable, and during a wind covered us as thickly with dust as would the Gobi sands—from which, the scientists tell us, it comes

The emblem of Shansi might well be a Duster One hangs at the door of every respectable house, and is not the nondescript ashamed object of the West hidden out of sight The duster which flaunted itself at the front door of the Principal s house gratified the eye, an object of taste and distinction an example of how the lowly things of life may be transformed from the despised to the attractive Ours was made of bright red and vivid green squares of material, which floated cornerwise from the end of a neat, slender, carved wooden handle When a loud batting broke the quiet, I knew before he rang the bell that a guest was at the door He was hard at work batting some portion of the thick dust from his shoes and trousers before presenting himself inside To a Southerner the dust was phenomenal

Even when the ground was frozen a foot deep there was still plenty of dust on the surface through which we must plough when we walked out

If properly tilled, the loess soil is highly productive Looking as if it would bear nothing, it produces much We had *kohl rabi* as big as a football, choice tomatoes, oranges, persimmons, and many vegetables and fruits besides the grains the wheat, and millet on which the people depend Delicious grapes grow, which are stored from the frost through the winter and produced for sale as required A huge dishful of luscious green and purple grapes was sent us by the Provincial Treasurer soon after our arrival

"They are part of his tribute from the growers,' some one said'

The winds produce occasional swirling, blinding dust storms, when it is useless to do other than keep shut up in the house till the storm passes One morning, hoping for a ride, I went to the stable, an open shed in the yard near by Suddenly columns of choking blinding dust swept in like a deluge There was no escape I turned my face close into a corner till it subsided In spite of double windows and closed doors the fine particles percolate inside, covering every floor and chair with a film against which it is hopeless to struggle till the sky clears, for darkness covers the land with the rain of dust Happily the dust is dry and not of the sticky order It is easily swept up, but this labour consumes much time

If, after six or seven months of dryness, a refreshing shower falls it is pure joy to soul and body There was one tiffin when we and our guests jumped up from the table and ran outside to watch the well nigh forgotten glories of a thunderstorm An old resident in Taiyuanfu told me that once, before his time, there was practically no rain for three years The people began to blame the foreigners in their province for the continuous drought At last came a blessed downpour, and with it heartfelt sighs of relief from some foreboding Western women

But a truce to dust! We will put it where it belongs, under our feet, and look upwards Above our heads was stretched, often even in winter, a great dome of cloudless heavenly blue,

without the interruption of a cloud Never have I seen such divinely blue skies and such resplendent sunshine

In my youth I had driven horses "You shall have a pony here," said Sing Su, and bargained for two for us

During the long winter when, at night, the temperature fell to zero and the air cut like a knife, it was still possible for my pony and myself to count on bright sun from ten till two, barring dust-storms After that hour it was another story Save for a *mafoo*, or groom, I rode and roamed the countryside alone, up through the deep gullies and fastnesses worn down by the trituration of the loess All around us was this yellow grey rock like soil Yet the carts of the farmers through the ages and the fierce rush of floods in the rains had worn it down, till the road or gully on which we rode might be anything from fifty to one hundred feet below the level of the fields above Very dangerous may those ravines prove in flood-time Men with horses and carts have been caught by the sudden rush and drowned, unable to scale the precipitous banks of loess shutting them in Sometimes *mafoo* and I would discover a track cut in the loess midway between the bottom and the top It was a fearful joy to ride along one of these, with no protection from the precipice at the side, the only possible precaution being to lean my weight towards the bank Moreover, Shansi ponies are not too certain of foot

We would arrive at a natural bridge, a thick solid block of the loess bridging a chasm, and unaccountably left standing with no break in it but a little tunnel at the bottom where any water could flow through This bridge had to be crossed without barrier or handrail Sing Su would say he should depend on me to know all the hiding-places in case we had to flee But in such a contingency would our *mafoo* prove faithful? He too knew the secret hills

Sing Su's new post was no sinecure These delightful expeditions were rarely for him In addition to the University administration, he had in his Chinese students formidable rivals to himself in the knowledge of Chinese literature! No student was admitted to this particular University until he had first taken his degree in the Chinese classics The desire to keep pace with them, to win at least their intellectual respect in their

own particular field, kept Sing Su grinding at Chinese like a boy in school, yet not an unhappy one

As for me, I was happy in that our predecessors in the Principal's house had left over something that needed doing "Of what profit to mankind,' I asked "are science and mathematics if the outcome is not an even keel to our floors, or rooms into which light and sun have free access?"

The official reception room, in which officials and their ladies must be welcomed, was a long depressing room, lighted only by a small bay window at one end The floor boards were so wide —half a measured yard—that they could not lie flat, nor had they been planed smooth Walking on them recalled the waves of the sea

Shansi coal is the finest in the world Yet here it was shut up in those unpleasing iron closed in stoves known as "American," which projected into the rooms by means of iron pipes Something more in keeping with the dignity of the University and of Western civilization must be evolved before I could undertake to invite the wives of officials to visit me

Up came those hardwood floor boards to be reduced in width and planed smooth Out came the American stoves. In came the sunshine and blue sky from two long windows let into a dead wall Drastic remedies but methought the end justified the means The stoves were replaced in the main rooms by open grates of local construction, to which were added mantelpieces as tasteful as the Taiyuan workmen could produce The one in the drawing room was of grey brick on which a local artist wrought his pleasure in leaves and flowers

It is impossible to imagine more glorious fires than those which glowed in our grates during the extreme winters They were "caverns of burning light," and at their fiercest, infernos for heat But Shansi coal must be kept within bounds, so devouring is it when out of hand Sometimes I dared not go to bed until our fires had died down, and thanked God for the care expended on the rebuilding of the chimneys even to my insisting on the Principal himself mounting the roof to ensure the removal of all adjacent woodwork and the perfecting of the brickwork! Before one of his yearly visits to the City-of-the-South, Sing Su gravely impressed on me the absolute necessity,

in case of fire, of my saving one Thing, even at the cost of all we possessed When I feared the hour of danger had arrived, to my horror, and try as I would, I could not recall what was that all important Thing At last, in a flash, it came back His translation of the Analects of Confucius, lying in the study drawer!

No wonder Sing Su's concern, for the result of those long labours, which had earned for him the soubriquet of Venerable Confucius, already had undergone a chequered history He had worked much upon that translation while in the City of the-South, and finished it in the North But some chapters had had to be rewritten, because the originals were burnt in a fire at the printers' in Japan The whole had been lost when travelling with him on the railway across Siberia To me, following later, was allotted the task of searching for the lost treasure—from Moscow to Harbin To me also came the joy of seeing it restored intact to Sing Su in Taiyuanfu—the City-of the Great-Plain A super-excellent, yet unknown European Customs official ran the box to earth, buried beneath a mountain of other so-called "Lost Luggage,' in a Japanese store in the heart of the city of Moukden!

(II)

When we reached Taiyuanfu, the position of Governor of the province was held by the Great Man En, an old Manchu aristocrat He was a charming *raconteur*, especially at feasts when the food was good and the wine had inspired But the official who loomed largest in the public eye was the Provincial Treasurer, the Great Man Ting He was then immersed in the exciting business of buying back the Shansi coal fields from a British company which had, for a limited period, acquired the right to work them When Ting returned from Peking, having succeeded in his mission, the city turned out *en masse* to acclaim the hero as he entered the city gates, ourselves amongst the crowd For a slow-minded people roused to enthusiasm is an interesting study Flushed and happy, Ting not only saw us but stopped his triumphal progress to greet us It was impossible not to congratulate him on his diplomatic success, for the coal-fields are a valuable possession

Alas, one difficulty in life is to be sure of the right occasion for congratulations! Ting and his people retrieved the concession to work the mines, but at a price The restoration cost the province a sum which it, the poorest province of China, could ill spare And it was deprived of the wealth which the Westerner with his enterprise, skill, and modern machinery, would greatly have increased The mines remained in the hands of tardy local companies, and the splendid Shansi coal largely remains in its native earth The output of coal would have given work to thousands of poverty stricken folk A Chinese gentleman once spoke to Sing Su in the City of the South about this lack of development of China's natural resources

"We are keeping our coal till yours is finished," said he

"Don't wait too long," advised Sing Su "Or we shall have found a substitute!"

His Excellency Ting was a tall, powerful, alert man an attractive personality His relations with Sing Su were very cordial They exchanged ideas and ideals—which are the forerunners of concrete action He was too big a man to be passed over by the Central Government, and he became Governor during our later years in Taiyuanfu Then, backed by Imperial commands, he made his great coup of clearing the entire province of widespread opium growing—an amazing feat, for which all honour is due Here and there the farmers rebelled and Ting sent a posse of soldiers to overawe them and to pull up the noxious plants On one occasion the growers fiercely resisted the soldiers with their farm implements A serious fray ensued during which eleven lives were lost

"I received a stiff reprimand from the Throne over that," he confided to Sing Su "although I only acted under Government orders in stamping out the poppy"

"Ten or twenty years hence you will find it impossible to use such drastic methods" prophesied Sing Su

Ting was not averse when he called on the Principal in his house, to being presented to Sing Su's *Inside-One* myself Be it noted however that though the officials generally were pleased to be introduced to me in our Western home, and their ladies seemed equally delighted to meet Sing Su when they visited me yet this proved a one sided concession No gentle

man ever appeared when I visited the ladies in their yamens Innovations—but from without, not within! The friendliness of Mr and Mrs Ting led me to invite her to dinner, and a royal entertainment it was Mrs Ting was invited for 6 30, but I knew what to expect The moment my late caller had departed I scrambled into my dress and had not even time to wash my face before the good lady and her large retinue appeared, exactly one hour before the appointed time

I had invited five other English ladies to meet Mrs Ting one who could sing beautifully, three who could talk Chinese fluently to her, and the fifth the wife of our mining professor When I offered my arm to escort Mrs Ting into the dining-room *à la* gentleman, she laughed till she rocked She was *au fait* with knife and fork, but ate little of our English menu. What made the dinner a success were some unusually fine crackers I had reserved from Christmas for the occasion Midway through the rather perfunctory meal we began a diversion by pulling them Mrs Ting cared less for food than ever after that Her sole wish was to pull crackers She was only twenty-one, and thought it quite in the order of things that she should not only have all that came out of the crackers but all the outside wrappings as well; to which we cheerfully assented The result was that she went home adorned with a gimcrack but pretty ring, a brooch, and a bracelet The caps, pictures, fancy covering, and a false nose she swept together in a heap and handed over to the safe keeping of her amah Never have I had such satisfaction in crackers

Before dinner our musical guest sang and played a number of English songs while Mrs Ting sat beside her, listening to the well trained voice and following the clever hands as they flew over the piano This had been carried over the passes slung between mules, the first to enter Shansi even partially by rail At nine o'clock came a message

'The Great Man has sent to call the T'ai T'ai home," said the man, and home the young lady had to go

She had come in her brougham, one of the seven which had recently appeared in the City-of-the-Great-Plain It had waited for her, the horse being taken out of the shafts and the carriage left on the hard mud tennis-court We parted gaily

Judge of my dismay to be told next morning that Mrs Ting's carriage had been upset on the way home

"*But she is not much the worse for it*, except a few scratches on her face and the loss of a pearl or two from her head dress," came the news

"I don't wonder at the accident,' I told Sing Su "When Mrs Ting sent the carriage and driver to take me to the yamen, the man tore most perilously along the streets, blowing his loud motor-horn incessantly '

At the time, the lady with me and I laughed till the tears came, for behind us a flustered outrider was frantically urging his horse after us He had to present our cards on arrival, and it was his duty to keep pace with us !

The moon was shining brilliantly it seems, when Mrs Ting left the University grounds, and the road was a good foreign made macadamized stretch But her terrible Jehu turning a corner too rapidly, came into violent contact with a big stone placed to keep vehicles out of the deep side gutter The carriage turned over, Mrs Ting was thrown out, and was glad to complete her furious ride and evening of foreign joys in the old fashioned native cart

But this tale of my official dinner party had another and pleasanter *denouement* Next day a servant in official garb arrived with presents for me from Mrs Ting a large dark green vase and a good red lacquer tray, both desirable objects Unwilling to accept, but fearing wholly to decline, I proposed keeping the red tray as of the lesser value To this the bearer refused absolutely to listen

'You must keep both ! You must keep both !" he reiterated

In the end I had to consent and the amount of my acknowledgment to the bearer was in accordance with my acceptance of the two *His Excellency Ting afterwards told Sing Su that* the dark-green colour of the vase was now a lost art to the Chinese

Our later visits to each other were mutually satisfactory On one of them Mrs Ting startled me

Do you approve of mixed marriages Chinese and English ?' she asked point blank She probably knew there was a case

in point in the City-of-the-Great-Plain. I hesitated a moment, and looked seriously at her.

"The time has not yet arrived," I briefly replied.

She nodded her head vigorously, making it quite plain that such also was her opinion.

On one of my visits to her I saw an interesting sight. In one of the courtyards through which I passed to reach the ladies' quarters there was, piled up, a quantity, perhaps a hundred, of "silver shoes," or silver ingots—sycee. They were doubtless newly arrived tribute money from the province to the funds of the exchequer, of which Mr. Ting was then Treasurer These "shoes" were curious objects: heavy little greyish lumps, fashioned into some sort of rough shape but bearing small resemblance to anybody's footwear, unless that of a bound-footed woman In Inland China a traveller had to carry his money in these "shoes," and employ banks at various stages to cut off the amount he required In return for his pure silver he received the equivalent in copper coins, the chief currency for centuries in China I never saw any other "shoes" besides those in the Treasurer's yamen Both in the City-of-the-South and in the City-of-the-Great-Plain Sing Su's paper cheque on a Shanghai bank was as effective as any "shoe," and far more convenient

Had my acquaintance with the ladies of China's high officials included only Mrs Ting, I might have failed somewhat in enthusiasm I do not know if Mrs Ting was considered good-looking Ideas differ on these points Once, thinking to gratify a number of young Chinese men, I descanted on the beauty of a Chinese lady whom we Westerners all admire, and known also to them Dead silence greeted my encomiums

"The lady you admire," at last said one of them diffidently, "is not our Chinese idea of beauty You admire her because her features are not typically Chinese!"

Perhaps Mrs Ting's were In course of time I learned that she was in reality No Two wife, the real wife preferring to remain in the seclusion of Mr Ting's ancestral home in a distant province Possibly the second Mrs Ting's fine little son was the secret of her accompanying the Great Man to Shansi, and being elevated to the position of leading lady of the province

When Mr Ting left, we lost a friendly official At the Revo-

lution he, like many another, Chinese and Manchu, resigned office He went to live in Shanghai, perhaps hoping there to keep clear of political intrigues The last news appalled us In broad daylight, in the streets of Shanghai, he was shot down without warning by a bullet from the pistol of an assassin The unknown assailant escaped in the crowd After much suffering Ting died In his last hours he asked for the presence of a British friend, who, needless to say, answered to the call But why he was killed remains a mystery to this day

(iii)

Life would have been sadly lacking in comfort had not the Bright One consented to follow our fortunes when we left the South He had toiled over long innumerable miles manfully carrying on the ends of his pole his master's food and bedding Warned that servants might prove a difficulty, we had also added a Boy in Tientsin and a second coolie in Peking To our relief we found a cook in Taiyuanfu—the little wizened dried up Ho Chia We soon paid the Tientsin Boy's fare back home All he essayed to do was to lay out the Principal's evening clothes for dinner The Bright One stepped into his place and filled it nobly Such was the pride he took in his work that I never had to find fault One afternoon I wanted him to go an errand

"There are guests for dinner," he hesitated

"It will not take you long to set the table," I said.

"It takes me an hour to do the dinner-napkins," he replied I sent the coolie

The Bright One's efforts produced beautiful results Not only were the napkins a study in birds, beasts, and fishes, but round the table would run the Greek key pattern or other device in tiny leaves from some particular tree in the garden punctuated *here and there by the most minute of pink flowers* —blossoms he begged, borrowed or maybe stole Neither before nor since have I eaten dinner on a table decorated by a greater artist

"You must realize, T'ai T'ai," he told me once when I deprecated the elaboration, "that my only object is to enhance your reputation as a hostess!"

When Sing Su departed in haste at the New Year on his yearly visit South to hear what Pang di, Ka-kung, Ding-er, and their friends were doing, and to advise, he left the Bright One behind, believing that he would stand by me in every circumstance Immediately after one of his departures the Bright One fell ill I was terribly anxious He was just twenty-five, the only son of his widowed mother a thousand miles off What I could do, that I did I called in the doctor from the English hospital, who sent a man to look after him when the Bright One objected to being taken into the hospital It was discovered that his fever arose from a little live creature in his blood

"He brought it with him from the South It is unknown here," said the doctor

Under the microscope he showed me the little black demon that in some causes elephantiasis, or permanent enlargement of the foot, as in the case of Pang di In the Bright One it had resulted in a dreadful abscess in the left armpit

"May I be present at the operation?' I asked, *in loco parentis* I feared the worst

But Ah Ming came through with the aid finally of a drain pipe or two in his shoulder On one of my constant subsequent visits I found my young friend weeping and moaning, probably with loneliness and weariness It hurt me to see him

"Don't cry," I pleaded, "Bright One with medicine and nourishment and nursing all will yet be well'

The dainties for his bedside cupboard and the rearranging of his pillows, helped as much as anything else, I fancy towards his restoration and to beguile the weary hours for of education he had but little He was just able to crawl out to welcome Sing Su on his return

'If there had been no T'ai T ai, there would be no Ah Ming' he declared to people In other words that I had saved his life

From that moment he was my bond slave Never have I been so assiduously waited upon and coddled always a stool for my feet, a cushion for my back ready and waiting and for my friends too When excruciating headaches prostrated me, the Bright One tended me devotedly

"He would love to wash my face and comb my hair, if I permitted,' I used to say to Sing Su

Thinking to cheer his existence, Sing Su, returning from the City of the-South, brought with him the Bright One's young wife, a girl of nineteen or twenty Away from the stern eye of her mother-in law, with whom she had lived, she failed to do her plain duty by the Bright One, to cook his food and keep their room clean I would see her jaunting out, with powdered face and carmined lips, in a gay cart with women of whose character I was in doubt There came a climax One day from the little yard at the back upon my ears came howls and a batting louder than any visitor dusting his shoes I ran out and pushed open the Bright One's door On the floor lay his wife Kneeling beside her was the Bright One, his left hand grasping her hair, his right arm employed in beating her with all its strength!

"Ah Ming! Ah Ming!" shrieked I

In his violent temper he took not the slightest heed but continued his castigations I fled to inform Sing Su what was happening on his highly respectable University premises After allowing a short interval for the return of sanity, he demanded the presence of the now quiet but sullen Bright One, who in his turn received such a lashing from Sing Su's tongue as he had never had before—and in the good round terms of his own language of the South

"But I am the husband," he stoutly maintained "I have the right to beat my wife when she richly deserves it"

'It is hateful hateful" vociferated Sing Su, 'to beat one's wife! Go away! Go away!'

He sent him summarily from his august presence But mark the anti climax There was no speedy improvement in the wife I too grew out of patience

"When Ah Ming beat you before," I delivered myself thus to her, "I was sorry When he does it again I shall not interfere

In our kitchen were the representatives of three provinces the elements of faction and civil war The cook was a Shansi man the coolie from near Peking in the Chihli province and the Bright One from Chekiang in the South

'In case of trouble I said to the Bright One on my own authority not Sing Su's we Chekiang people must stand by each other!

Ah Ming had to learn this new Northern language just as much

as I had, but he was younger and he was Chinese, and very soon I was leaning on him as interpreter. One day it happened thus I was alone in the dining-room when suddenly the heavens were rent by loud angry shouts and ejaculations Jumping on to a chair in order to look out of the high window facing the back court, I beheld Chiu Jen, the mild even tempered coolie, coming along the path His face was aflame, and he held in a fierce grasp the little cook by the pigtail, and was thus forcing him into my presence I sprang down and met them at the door. Chiu Jen was shaking with anger and held on to the cook's queue like grim death He had froth at his mouth

"I cannot and I will not stand it any longer!" he shouted

The Bright One was out, Sing Su was away I encouraged Chiu Jen to relax his hold of the convenient handle upon the cook's head, and the cook, only too happy to be released, fled at once

"Come inside, Chiu Jen," I said 'for I have a letter which must go at once In fact, I want you to take a rickshaw and deliver it"

I scribbled a hasty line to a friend gave him the coppers for the ride, and trusted to the air to cool his outraged pride He returned as mild as milk When Ah Ming appeared I asked an explanation

"The truth is, the cook makes life in the kitchen a misery with his mean abominable temper He is always late with his preparations, gets flustered, and visits it on us," he said

Next morning I went into the kitchen when I knew the cook would be alone

'Ho Chia" said I "Chiu Jen is a fine strong man far bigger than you If I were you, I would be very careful how I treated him"

'Official lady! All the trouble comes because he is a foreigner!' he surprisingly replied That meant, he was not a Shansi man but from Chihli

'It is nothing of the kind," I retorted indignantly "It is caused entirely by your horrible temper Remember! Chiu Jen is tall and strong He could easily *tae sz*—beat you to death if you provoke him too far I advise you to be more careful!

With which Parthian shot I left him and went on my im

moral way But the frightened cook mended his ways—and his tongue

Once only did the Bright One fail—at one of the University functions A Governor, in gorgeous apparel, sat on either side of the Principal, one being the departing the other the newly arrived administrator of the Province Somebody moved an elbow, with the result that the Bright One, serving coffee, poured a good mixture of sugar and cream down his master s black evening coat After mopping up as much as possible, feeling unspeakably disgraced, he obliterated himself in an outside larder and appeared no more the entire evening!

By this time he had become used at any rate to the evening costume of Western ladies though Western dancing remained a difficulty with all our Chinese friends in the Interior and both dancing and evening attire were a stumbling block to us who wanted to present the West at its best, and spare the blushes of the East Once in the City of the South our consul's cousin, lately from Shanghai came to dine in a low-cut dress So great was the shock to the servants, that after one horrified look they kept their faces averted from the sight of her, and even when offering dishes, held their heads turned over their shoulders!

In 1911, in accordance with a former agreement, the University was handed over to the Chinese Already the authorities had bestowed upon Sing Su the highest possible rank in the circumstances namely the Red Button which was, under the Empire, of the Chief Order of Buttons At the end when orders and marks for good service were distributed, the Bright One to his great delight was also remembered He received a Button similar to those bestowed on the lower grades of military officials for catching brigands—a thing he had never done, but these anomalies are not unknown in the Western world either

We restored the Bright One and his wife to the place they knew best, the City-of the-South and here they lived happily ever after Or so it appeared when sixteen years later we paid them a visit in their comfortable and well founded home and took tea with them Indeed they made me a present of a silk picture in needlework of the island where my life in their city had begun—the River s Heart

TWO of the chief official families then stationed in the City-of-the-Great-Plain were called Kung and Lo: the former Chinese, the latter Manchu. Both were of true blue-blood type, on whose high social and official status no reflections could be cast. Both also showed us cordiality and kindness from the first; though always separately and never in conjunction either with each other or the rest of the numerous official families in Taiyuanfu. That the acquaintance ripened into real friendship is proved by the fact that it has withstood the test of long absences, yet is renewed with joy on every possible opportunity either in England or China, and amongst the younger as well as the senior members on either side.

Of the Kungs I need say little, for they live in the pages of the first book which Da-ling wrote. But Da-ling's Chinese name is now changed, as is the custom in China when people reach years of discretion. It was the Great Scholar Kung himself who chose the name by which she is now known to our Chinese friends. He considered, and he gave her the name Fu Yün, or Happy Gardener. In his young days Kung Ta Jen, our then Literary Chancellor for the Province, was attached to the Royal Palace in Peking, one of his onerous duties being to attend the Emperor when once a year he went to offer sacrifice at the Temple of Heaven.

"This meant I had to wait out in the open at dead of night for hours at a stretch," he told us; "and in the intense cold of this North China which freezes stiff a Southerner like myself! I had on the thickest fur clothes, but it was terribly cold those February nights waiting for the dawn and the sacrificial hour to arrive."

His Excellency Lo was made our Governor a few months after we reached the City-of-the-Great-Plain, and he remained such for some two years. I had a golden opportunity of learning to know and appreciate his delightful wife and three dear daughters. Of his Excellency I only caught glimpses through my windows, but he found favour with me because, when Sing Su approached him with the desire I had to invite his wife and daughters to dine with me, he gave the suggestion his blessing.

"Certainly, with pleasure," he cheerfully responded, which was not then the usual attitude of Chinese officials to such approaches "The girls are at their lessons every day but Sunday," he added

Oh Western innovations, that every seventh day should be a rest day, and in an official household!

"My Within-One is occupied in going to church on Sundays," replied Sing Su, knowing well what their coming would entail, that it would turn our rest day into turmoil

Ultimately a day was fixed which interfered with none of our duties

The Lo family had come to Taiyuanfu after the shame and humiliation of 1900 It must have called for courage, especially on the part of the ladies, when, on the elevation of Lo Ta Jen to the Governorship, they had to take up their abode in the very yamen which, according to Chinese ideas, might well be haunted by the ghosts of those fifty Western people who had been butchered a few years before on their doorstep by Yu Hsien, their fellow Manchu Of that bad past we never once spoke

Mrs Lo was a woman ahead of her times Education she valued, and Western education too I was delighted on my first visit to her by the sentiments to which she gave expression

"Nowadays," said she, "many of our young people acquire only a smattering of Western knowledge and culture Yet they become vain and conceited! We should like it to be otherwise with our children We hope their education will rather *k'ai hsin* —open their hearts, or widen their horizons"

I soon learnt, too, how Mrs Lo yearned to see and know the conditions of the life by which she was surrounded, yet from which she was everlastingly debarred The great yamen, with court after court stretching away leading to their own secluded quarters, was little better than a roomy prison to her The large-footed boatwomen of Canton had better chances than she of mixing with the outside world

'My sole opportunity is when I come to you at the University," she later explained 'Even then I may not lift my head to look through the carriage windows that surround me No! I must sit with eyes lowered or I should be stigmatized as a bold woman"

Only by degrees did she express herself

"When I went with my husband to Szechwan, the Far West of China, how I longed to learn about the lives of those people in that distant part of our Empire! But it was 'not done' by a woman of my class I returned no wiser than I went"

Seventeen miles from the City-of the Great-Plain is a famous spot called Chin-tsz It has beautiful temple buildings, mighty lacquered red pillars round which twist gorgeous golden dragons Glorious gingko, or maidenhair trees, stand in its court, and a perennial spring of purest water gives refreshment I expatiated one day on a visit which Sing Su and I had paid there Mrs Lo envied me

"How my daughters and I would love to see it all!" she exclaimed

Fired with enthusiasm she went home emboldened to suggest it

Oh yes," she was told "You shall indeed go, and we will at once begin to prepare Soldiers must be sent to line the route for your protection Servants shall be ordered to clean and make the temple fit for your reception etc, etc" There was, in short, to be such endless fuss and disturbance that any pleasure in the anticipated outing was spoiled

"Rather than incur all that, we preferred to stay at home," she told me

In quiet tones, but with intense feeling, this great lady made me realize how from the depths of her heart she resented the galling conditions and iron bound customs which kept her, and such as herself, in this outer darkness of ignorance I gained the impression, too, that official ladies generally, and the ladies Lo in particular, led isolated, if not lonely lives As wife of the Governor Mrs Lo might not without loss of prestige be on friendly visiting terms with the other official ladies Hence she was familiar with none of them We knew them better than she The system went on down the whole official scale, until it seemed there was nobody but themselves—and ourselves —with whom any of them could associate So it was a blessed thought that within calling distance was the lady from the Great Brave Country! She, strangely enough, despite her official rank, had yet a freedom so absurdly wide that there

seemed set no limits to her friendliness extending to all the world To me turned Mrs Lo, as to a loophole in a lofty forbidding wall Through my eyes she possibly gained for herself and her daughters a wider view and a more adequate knowledge of life than her own restrictions permitted With the best intentions it was difficult for me to rise always to the occasion

The first impression my friend made on me was that of a tall, rather fine featured woman Her long rich Manchu gown reaching to the ankles, and her black satin shoes with their thick white painted clumsy soles gave her increased height The shoes had beneath the soles a sort of wooden clog like a patten presumably to raise the wearer from the mire As no Manchu woman's feet were ever bound, not even those of the Empress on her throne, the Lo ladies had a liberty of movement unknown to Chinese ladies Mrs Lo's Manchu head dress was marvellously fashioned and very different from any worn by a Chinese woman It consisted of a broad, fine, curved piece of thin wood, covered with black satin and ornamented with coloured flowers and pearls It stood upright and ran straight across the centre of the crown of the head extending like butterfly wings considerably beyond the sides of the head The little circular foundation which kept it in place seemed so slight that I wondered how the wearer could maintain it bolt upright or immovable Yet both Mrs Lo and her daughters managed it It seemed to me no Western woman could have maintained such a poise for more than a few minutes at a time

Of course Mrs Lo s face was thickly powdered her lips carmined her eyebrows pencilled and reduced to a thin black line by the removal of each refractory hair And yet and yet, how soon we forgot such trivialities and became *en rapport* reading each other like an open book! This despite the fact that *Mrs Lo spoke not a word of English and that I lacking Sung* Su's facility for languages was little better in the Northern tongue We were driven to the use of a language older and more trustworthy than that of the lips one to which babes and women respond that of intuition and the heart In this language Mrs Lo and I had perfect understanding However at crucial moments we could also fall back on a friend Miss

Sheckleton, an Englishwoman well versed in Mandarin, to rescue us from undue flounderings.

"Why did your elder sisters not come?" I asked Ta Chai, sweet and dainty and just sixteen, who alone accompanied her mother on the first visit—"Scented Blossom" in Da-ling's book.

"They will come next time," quickly responded Mrs. Lo.

How determined that day was Mrs. Lo to see everything! First I led them over the Principal's house, of which, knowing well the effort put into it, I was now justly proud. Next we walked across to the University buildings, where Sing Su himself deigned to act as guide to the august lady. Through the tremendous length of the examination hall, where noted foreigners occasionally lectured, the reception-rooms, the long rows of students' quarters, the various class-rooms, the large sports grounds, we walked, till even she declared she had seen enough for one day and would now go home and rest.

The auspicious occasion came when, with two or three of the Western professors' wives, I was invited to dine with the Lo ladies. The carriage duly arrived for us, and with us went two or three attendants, the Bright One among them. The invitation was for one o'clock, and we went in anticipation of an elaborate long-drawn wonderful Chinese meal. Imagine then our surprise—and regret—to find ourselves expeditiously served with an excellent European dinner. But at the end came the welcome Chinese touch. In place of the Western finger-bowls in which to dip the tips of the fingers, when we left the table we were led to some handsome bright shallow brass bowls, each of which contained hot scented water in which lay small brand-new towels. We wrung these out, allowed the hot steam to evaporate, and then passed them over our hands and faces. The benefit was immediately realized.

We were the recipients of great respect, much courtesy, and were very happy together. But it was impossible entirely to forget where we were. Now and again came a tug at the heart-strings, a chill on the spirit, as the awful shadow of the cruel past fell on us. In the same way Sing Su's University cart, on his official visits, was never carried over the threshold of this yamen without his hand instinctively rising to lift his mortar-board. Not one of those lives sacrificed at that spot had been

other than lived and given in devotion to China Perish the thought that we held those dear new friends of ours, now entertaining us, responsible in the slightest degree for the crime of eight short years before! Rather we compassionated them because they had to endure the shame and disgrace We only wanted them to love us in spite of our knowledge of their countrymen's conduct

The entertainment of a Governor's ladies at dinner was not a thing to be lightly undertaken On the contrary, it was so expensive that only once—as in the case of Mrs Ting—was I allowed the pleasure in connection with Mrs Lo, and that in farewell, when His Excellency was promoted to be Governor of Kiang si province Cost of food was not the deterrent that was good and cheap The affair was costly because no Governor's wife could come on a set occasion without a large retinue coming also, just as Royalty in Europe cannot go a visiting without a numerous following When Sing Su invited the Governor, with the other high provincial officials, to dine at the University, their retainers all told, numbered between three and four hundred Every one of these had to be given either a meal or its equivalent in money! The University adopted the latter plan The delicate point was that every man or set of men had to be allowed a different amount, commensurate with rank and service Happily, the Chinese Treasurer of the University relieved us of the labour of the varied disbursements Mrs Lo's retinue consisted of about seventy attendants, and with her came also her three daughters, Ta Ting, Ta Ch'un, and Ta Chai

As it was winter, the ladies were clad in long straight satin gowns lined with fur, over which they wore very short jackets, beautifully embroidered An amah accompanied them into the drawing room and there helped them off with their outside garments She folded these up in the easy straight lines peculiar to Oriental clothes and then carried the bundles into an outside room

We were a gay party of twelve at the round Northern dining-table, where we sat for an hour and a half Nor did it seem long for all were at their cheeriest, despite our speedy separation The fun began when we went to music and games in the drawing room Those high-born Manchu girls never had such a

hilarious time in their lives, especially when the younger Western ladies insisted on attempting the Lancers Of course they must join Finding themselves hampered by their heavy Manchu shoes, they slipped them off They shortened their gowns by tying their silk handkerchiefs round their waists Thus prepared, they were more or less pulled merrily round the large room in tomboy fashion by their Western partners

As their mother and I sat watching their happy antics she laughed till the tears came Ah me ! I fear she never laughed so heartily and unrestrainedly again I write of these friendly Manchus with hesitating, albeit tender hand His Excellency and Mrs Lo lived to see the Revolution, and then passed out themselves Gone too is mischievous spritely Ta Ch'un—she who looked so deep into my eyes as she made at me her pretty *moues*

Shansi, it seems, is not a province where men stay on for ever When the University was transferred to Chinese administration in 1910, Sing Su found other activities awaiting him I left Shansi with regret Its strange geographical formations had presented numerous attractions Is there not one interesting legend that the province is the cradle of the whole human race ? Dr Edwards of Taiyuanfu who had relatives among the victims and wrote the story of the Fire and Sword which decimated the foreign community in Shansi, tells of a mighty flood which, according to Chinese tradition, drowned all but one man and one woman These escaped by leaping on to the backs of two huge lions who carried them to the topmost ledge of the Ren tsu Shan, or " Mountain of the Ancestors of Man " Saved from destruction, the two became the parents of the human race, including you and me !

In 1911, during the Revolution the Happy Gardener, alias Da ling her colleague, and I were living in Peking where we rediscovered the Lo family To the Happy Gardener and myself it was a time of anxiety, largely because of Sing Su's cables from England beseeching us to take ourselves out of " the nest of Manchus " in which we were living Twice did the British Minister, Sir John Jordan, send his carriage and escort late at night to bring to the safety of the Legation the three English women living in that danger zone We received such charming

CHAPTER XXXV

REVOLUTION AND A RING OF GOLD

THRONES and kingdoms might totter to their fall, but my pressing concern during the Revolution was the welfare of those gently nurtured Manchu womenfolk I feared they might even be reduced to lacking their daily food, especially after the soldiers had looted their premises of all they could lay hands upon When Mrs Lo confided to me that hidden in the earth were money and valuables they still possessed I begged her to let me take them to the security of the foreign bank

"The soldiers may return burn the house down and discover your small hoard' I said

His Excellency's concern was meanwhile not their money but a beautiful scroll painted in the Middle Ages entrusted to his care by a friend in far Szechwan! So Mrs Lo it was who went with me to the bank and handed over there the little blocks of pure gold and the gold leaf

Gold leaf is even more valuable than gold nuggets," she told me

There were pearls too, and an English gold watch (a gift from a consul), and manifold treasures and heirlooms The banker gave me the safe-custody receipt, for they were in my name I naturally handed it to her

She gave it me back! Regardless of my protests, she insisted, and it remained in my keeping till we left Peking as also the deeds of her house

We all have proud moments in our lives. This is one of mine Years before, in South China a well to do country woman had given me her Passport to Heaven Here, in the North, a woman of high official rank now entrusted me with the safe custody of all her earthly riches And both were women of acknowledged intelligence and integrity!

My first experience of China was a Riot my last a Revolution Was living in China worth while? Well worth while

On the eve of our departure for England where Sing Su and

Sea-borne needed us, Mrs Lo and Ta Chai came to bid us good-bye, bearing presents for the Happy Gardener and myself, including two rolls of beautiful thick blue silk

"I do not know how much silk an English dress needs, but here is enough for two Chinese gowns," she said

A year later the silk made the travelling dress of the Happy Gardener when she set out on her honeymoon

For me Mrs Lo had brought a handsome gold ring, in the centre of which was a piece of dark-green jade At the sides

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which surely Strength need each the other. When welded together what shall they not achieve?

EPILOGUE BY HER DAUGHTER

ROMANCE opened high gates for my mother when, as a bride, she left her cold English northlands and went to make a home in a surprising far-off Chinese city; and ever after she approved of valiancy and adventuring. With her blessing, and Sing Su's, I started off for America in February this year, to lecture about China. She had polished and re-polished the manuscript of her book for the last time, and it was being printed. She wrote it, she avowed, for her grand-children when they should grow up; she being 73 when she finished it. Together she and I had sorted and sifted every possible photograph as illustration; for she wanted her Chinese friends to be fittingly portrayed by the pictures as well as the text, so that Western eyes might perceive, without doubting, something of their attraction, and their skill of hand.

We smiled at each other with understanding that stark cold morning when I bade her adieu. We agreed in everything that mattered—my mother and I; delighting in the same beautiful things of this earth: wide uplands and growing corn, hill-tops and water-falls, in wind and rain as well as sun, and especially in human beings, learned and unlearned, Eastern and Western.

I think now that she knew "a Post was inquiring for her from the Celestial City," but I had no such thought. Within a few days she was taken ill: but she would not let me be told, and she persuaded Sing Su and Sea-borne into her own silence. That exhilarating care-free expedition to the other side of the Atlantic, where I spoke daily about China, was her last gift, not only to me, her daughter, but to the land where she and Sing Su laid me often and trustfully in Chinese arms. Her last letter ended: "I shall think of the lectures at Washington. I embrace thee. Thy mother." A cable about her illness reached me, as she desired, at the end of my schedule. I caught the first boat back, but in the middle of the ship's concert I received a wireless bidding me look at a verse in Revelations. So I knew she had left us. I was just in time to see her sweet face, smiling, tender, in the still Serenity—a lily for loveliness.

It has been comfort beyond words to have had this last

service to do for her—to correct the proofs of this book of hers. Reading it through again, seeing once more the picture of her life unroll, I see another drama springing before my eyes. My ears hear a King conversing lovingly with faithful servants: and they reply, with innocent surprise: "But, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? . . . or a stranger, and took Thee in? . . . or sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?" Then the King answers: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these, My brethren . . ."

As I write, in this City-of-Dreaming-Spires, I look upon the garden which she made so pleasant by her work and planning. Oh for the sound of her voice, fresh and joyous despite her age, *calling through the open window from the smooth green lawn!* But she had ended her work, her life rounded singularly off by the accounting for it which she has given in these pages. On my finger is now her ring of mingled Chinese and Western gold—a trust, rather than a legacy.

DOROTHEA HOSIE.

OXFORD, *Summer* 1931.